342 always shade from the many trees and palms. Every
house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani
Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing
in a separate compound, have been by many writers
supposed to have been designed with special reference
to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major
Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is
[244] his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of
the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess
a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or
expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The
garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge
or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or
patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-
[356] room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is
[237] taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile
to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-
[532] dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk
346 on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a
[343] vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a
cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where
[164] some family spirit is located. These are generally those
of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died
of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or
other emblem is located within this out-house, which is
also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a
saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura
[782] (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every
evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate
351 the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner
[312] is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for
[245] bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the
garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain,
tamarind and mango.

177 of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins
301 which, having found favour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency. So fond are the Malayâlis of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitation of the sequins. The former are often seen to
[554] bear the legend 'Made in Austria.' The Nâyars wear none but the gold sequins. The brass imitations are worn by the women of the inferior races. If one asks the ordinary Malayâli, say a Nâyar, what persons are represented on the sequin, one gets for answer that they are Râma and Sita; between them a cocoanut tree."

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789 In connection with the wearing of charms by Nâyars Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "One individual (a
[777] Kiriattil Nâyar) wore two rings made of an amalgamation of gold and copper, called tambâk, on the ring finger of
[325] the right hand for good luck. Tambâk rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to wash the face with the hand, on which is a tambâk ring. Another wore two rings of the pattern called trilōham (lit. metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these was made during an eclipse.
301 Yet another wore a silver ring as a vow, which was to be
789 given up at the next festival at Kottiūr, a famous festival
782 in North Malabar. The right nostril of a Sūdra Nâyar
(304) was slit vertically as if for the insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had his nose slit. Another wore a silver bangle. He had a wound in his arm which was long in healing, so he made a vow to the god at Tirupati (in the North Arcot district), that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to send the bangle there by a messenger.

bangle there by a messenger. An Akattu Charna Nâyar 301 789
wore an amulet to keep off the spirit of a Brâhman who
died by drowning. Another had a silver ring, on which
a piece of a bristle from an elephant's tail was arranged."

Tattooing is said by Mr. Subramani Aiyar not to be 304
favoured by North Travancore Nâyars, and to be only
practiced by Nâyar women living to the south of Quilon.
Certain accounts trace it to the invasion of Travancore [177]
by a Moghul Sirdar in 1680 A.D. In modern times it
has become rare. The operation is performed by women [564]
of the Odda or Kurava caste before a girl reaches the
twelfth year.

Concerning the religious worship of the Nâyars, Mr. 776
Subramani Aiyar writes that "Buchanan notes that the
proper deity of the Nâyars is Vishnu, though they wear
the mark of Siva on their foreheads. By this is merely
meant that they pay equal reverence to both Siva and
Vishnu, being Smartas converted to the tenets of Saṅkaracharya.
Besides worshipping the higher Hindu deities,
the Nâyars also manifest their adoration for several
minor ones, such as Mâtan, Utayam, Yakshi, Chattan,
Chantakarnan, Murti, Maruta, and Arukula. Most of [532]
these have granite representations, or at least such [778]
emblems as a sword or a cane, and are provided with
a local habitation. Besides these, persons who have met [775]
with accidental death, and girls who have died before [766]
their tâli-tying ceremony, are specially worshipped
under the designations of Kazhichchavu and Kannichchavu.
Magicians are held in some fear, and talismanic [791]
amulets are attached to the waist by members of both [789]
sexes. Kuttichattan, the mischievous imp of Malabar,
is supposed to cause much misery. Various spirits [782]
are worshipped on the Tiruvonam day in the month of
Avani (August-September), on the Uchcharam or 28th

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[782] day of Makarom (January-February), and on some
Tuesdays and Fridays. Kolam-tullal, Velan-pravarti,
Ayiramaniyam-tullel, Chavuttu, Tila-homam, and a host
of other ceremonies are performed with a view to
propitiate spirits, and the assistance of the Kaniyans
[825] and Vēlans is largely sought. Serpents, too, whose
images are located on the north-western side of most
gardens in Central and North Travancore, receive a
[821] large share of adoration. The sun is an object of
[782] universal worship. Though the Gayatri cannot be
studied, or the Sandhyavandanam of the Brāhmans
performed, an offering of water to the sun after a bath,
to the accompaniment of some hymn, is made by almost
every pious Nāyar. The Panchakshara is learnt from
538 an Ilayatu, and repeated daily. A large portion of the
[517] time of an old Nāyar is spent in reading the Rāmayana,
Bhagavata and Mahābharata, rendered into Malayālam
by Tunchattu Ezhuttachhan, the greatest poet of the
Malabar coast. Many places in Travancore are pointed
out as the scene of memorable incidents in the Rāmayana
and Mahābharata. There are many temples, tanks,
and mountains connected with Rāma's march to the
capital of Rāvana. Equally important are the singular
feats said to have been performed by the five Pāndavas
during the time of their wanderings in the jungles before
the battle of Kurukshetra. Bhima especially has built
temples, raised up huge mountains, and performed
many other gigantic tasks in the country. There are
some village temples owned exclusively by the Nāyars,
where all the karakkars (villagers) assemble on special
623 occasions. A very peculiar socio-religious ceremony per-
178 formed here is the kūttam. This is a village council,
574 held at the beginning of every month for the adminis-
tration of the communal affairs of the caste, though, at

796 In some families, after
the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds
526 are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of
535 the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other
[524] prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are
also resorted to."

264 On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as
515 follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by
the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his
782 food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It
783 is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the
[512] temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed ;
[564] generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere
near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any
inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house
from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks
newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is
pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he
[683] can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in
his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste
thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly
[656] with a sword ; there would be no words. Now that
[671] the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms
Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a
[178] law system under which high and low are rated alike,
the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious
grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him
as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not
diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the
same way.

796 "I will attempt a description of the ceremonial
[773] observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near
Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where
Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain
an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

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he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the 794
blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith 564
receives the silver umbrella from the Arayan, and [326].
executes any repairs that may be needful, and, in like
manner, the blacksmith looks to the sword. In the [482]
afternoon, the headman of the Tiyans, called the Tandān,
comes to the temple followed by two of his castemen [782]
carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders three
bunches of young cocoanuts—an appropriate offering, the
Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession is climbing
the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the
cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming,
and a large crowd with the Tandān, and in front of him
are men dancing, imitating sword play with sticks and
shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing
off imaginary arrows, the while shouting and yelling
madly. Then come the blacksmith and the goldsmith [326]
with the sword. Following comes the Arayan with the
silver umbrella to the accompaniment of very noisy
drumming, in great state under a canopy of red cloth held
lengthways by two men, one before, the other behind.
The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the
night, and ceases at daybreak. These six days of the 796
festival are called Vilākku. A word about the drumming. 534
The number of instrumentalists increases as the festival
goes on, and on the last day I counted fifty, all Nāyars.
The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin
stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band,
about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width,
and the common long drum much narrower at the ends
than in the middle; and there were (I think) a few of
those narrow in the middle, something like an hourglass
cut short at both ends. They are beaten with
curved drum sticks, thicker at the end held in the hand.

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[465] man receives five edangālis of rice from the temple, and
a small piece of the flesh of the goat which is sacrificed
later. These nine men eat only once a day during the
[834] festival; they do no work, remaining quietly at home
[841] unless when at the temple; they cannot approach any one
of caste lower than their own; they cannot cohabit with
women; and they cannot see a woman in menstruation
during these days. A crowd of Tiyans join more or
less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making
a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when
they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the
arrack in them. These men are always under a vow.
[782] In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the
benefit they have already received from the goddess—
796 cure from sickness as a rule. To the west of the
564 temple is a circular pit—it was called the fire-pit, but
there was no fire in it—and this pit all the Tiyan women
of the neighbourhood circumambulate, passing from
west round by north, three times, holding on the head
a pewter plate, on which are a little rice, bits of plantain
leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each
woman completes her third round, she stands for a
moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the
[782] contents of the plate into the pit. She then goes to the
western gate of the enclosure, and puts down her plate
for an instant while she makes profound salaam to the
796 goddess ere going away. Now the procession starts
776 out from the temple, issuing from the northern gate,
788 and for a moment confronts a being so strange that he
demands description. Of the many familiar demons of
the Malayālis, the two most intimate are Kuttichchāttan
and Gulikan, who are supposed to have assisted Kāli
(who is scarcely the Kāli of Brāhmanism) in overcoming the Āsura, and on the occasion of this festival these

796 788 dance, round by south to the westward, and, leaving
776 the enclosure, proceeds to a certain banyan tree, under
536 which is a high raised platform built up with earth
and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of
796 fifty yards are the nine men of the Tiyan caste men-
564 tioned already, carrying kalasams on their heads, and a
788 crowd of women of the same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate, larger than the plates used when encircling the fire pit, on which are rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and its contents are on this occasion, as well as before, called talapōli. I could not make out that anything in particular is done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to the temple, the nine men and the Tiyan women following,
[782] carrying their kalasams and talapōli. On the way, a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under a vow. In the procession are a number of devil-dancers, garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting, in an avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards one of these devil-dancers, who, never ceasing his gyrations and contortions, presently seizes its head, wrings
[755] it off, and flings it high in the air. The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for some ailment. The procession passes through the temple yard from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree, under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tiyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let me note here the curious distribution of the rice which is heaped in the fire pit.

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[787] in a sort of swoon, and everyone, excepting only the
priests and temple servants, leaves the place as quickly
796 as possible. The sheds which have been erected for
782 temporary habitation around the temple will be quickly
demolished, and search will be made round about to
make sure that no one remains near while the mystic rite
of sacrifice is about to be done. When the whole place
has been cleared, the four owners of the temple, who
have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied
round its neck to the chief priest, and, as soon as they
[793] have done so, they depart. There will remain now in the
temple three Mūssads, one drummer (Marayar), and two
[534] temple servants. The reason for all this secrecy seems
[794] to lie in objection to let it be known generally that any
sacrifice is done. I was told again and again that there
796 was no such thing. It is a mystic secret. The Mūssad
789 priests repeat mantrams over the goats for an hour as a
782 preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest dons
793 a red silk cloth, and takes in his hand a chopper-like
sword in shape something like a small bill-hook, while
the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple.
This room is rather a passage than a room, as there are
to it but two walls running north and south. The goats
are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room,
facing to the south. The chief priest stands to the east
of the goat, facing west, as he cuts off its head with the
chopper. He never ceases his mantrams, and the goats
never flinch—the effect of the mantrams. Several cocks
are then sacrificed in the same place, and over the
carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal
powder mixed in water (karutta gurusi) and saffron
(turmeric) powder and lime-water (chukanna gurusi), the
flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three
Mūssads only see the sacrifice—a part of the rite which

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is supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. 789
The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple 782
by the northern door to the north side of the temple, 793
and from this place one of the temple servants, who is
blindfolded, drags it three times round the temple, the
Mūssads following closely, repeating their mantrams, the
drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers.
The drummer dare not look behind him, and does not know [534]
what is being done. After the third round, the drummer
and the temple servant go away, and the three Mūssads
cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of
the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice, when
cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the
temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams.
As each mantram is ended, a handful of saffron (turmeric) [533]
powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer,
who by this time has returned, keeps up an obligato
pianissimo with his drum, using his fingers. He faces
the north, and the priests face the south. Presently the
priests run (not walk) once round the temple, carrying
the cooked rice, and scattering it wide as they go, repeating
mantrams. They enter the temple, and remain
within until daybreak. No one can leave the temple
until morning comes. Before daybreak, the temple is
thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mūssads go
out, and the five Nambūtiris again enter before sunrise,
and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day, for
this day only. The next morning, the Mūssad priests
return and resume their duties. Beyond noting that the 796
weirdness of the human tumult, busy in its religious 564
effusion, is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, [541]
mere description of the scene of the festival will not be
attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the
gallery of pretty Nāyar women looking on from the

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564 garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below
[793] must be left to the imagination. It will have been
noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival;
they purify the temple before and after, but no more.
796 The importance attached to the various offices of those
793 who are attached to the temple by however slender
578 a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble
between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant), paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella.

796 "An important local festival is that held near Palghat,
184 in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited
entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

● 782 "Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the
[131] southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called
[346] Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of
[635] the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited
the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of
[126] a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satis-
[532] faction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant
in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

a silver string as long as the giver is tall. Goldsmiths 782
working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the [326]
gate of the temple, ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering. The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally here. A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself to give a silver image of a child, a silver leg, and so on, in the event of his having fulfilment of his desire.

"A true Malayâli festival is that held at Koṭṭiyūr in 796
North Malabar, in the forest at the foot of the Wynād
6 hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little glade where it is situated. It is held in July during the height of the monsoon rain. Though it is a festival for high and low, these do not mix at Kottiyūr. The Nâyars [564]
go first, and after a few days, the Nâyars having done, the Tiyans, and so on. A curious feature of it is that the people going to attend it are distinctly rowdy, feeling that they have a right to abuse in the vilest and filthiest terms everyone they see on the way—perhaps a few days' march. And not only do they abuse to their hearts' content in their exuberant excitement, but they use personal violence to person and property all along the road. They return like lambs. At Kottiyūr one sees [346]
a temple of Īsvara, there called Perumāl (or Perumāl Īsvara) by the people, a low thatched building forming a hollow square, in the centre of which is the shrine, which I was not permitted to see. There were some [793]
Nambūtiri priests, who came out, and entered into conversation. The festival is not held at the temple, but in the forest about a quarter of a mile distant. This spot [778]
is deemed extremely sacred and dreadful. There was,

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778 however, no objection to myself and my companions visiting it; we were simply begged not to go. There were with us a Nāyar and a Kurichchan, and the faces of these men, when we proceeded to wade through the little river, knee-deep and about thirty yards wide, in order to reach the sacred spot, expressed anxious wonder. They dared not acompany us across. No one (excepting, of course, a Muhammadan) would go near the place, unless during the few days of the festival, when it was safe; at all other times any man going to the place is destroyed instantly. Nothing on earth would have persuaded the Nāyar or the Kurichchiyan to cross that river. Orpheus proceeding to find his Eurydice, Dante about to enter the Inferno, had not embarked on so fearful a journey. About a hundred yards beyond the stream, we came upon the sacred spot, a little glade in the forest. In the centre of the glade is a circle of piled up stones, 12 feet in diameter. In the middle of the pile of stones is a rude lingam. Running east from the circle of the lingam is a long shed, in the middle of which is a long raised platform of brick, used apparently as a place for cooking. Around the lingam there were also thatched sheds, in which the people had lodged [788] during the festival. Pilgrims going to this festival [792] carry with them offerings of some kind. Tiyans take young cocoanuts. Every one who returns brings with him a swish made of split young leaves of the cocoanut palm."

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788 Of the Kottiyūr festival, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The Nambūdiri [793] priests live in a little wayside temple at Kottiyūr, but [778] the true shrine is a quarter of a mile away in the forest across one of the feeder streams of the Valarpattanam river. For eleven months in the year, the scene is

inconceivably desolate and dreary ; but during the month 796
Edavam (May-June) upwards of 50,000 Nāyars and 788
Tiyans from all parts of Malabar throng the shrine for the twenty-eight days of the annual festival. During the rest of the year, the temple is given up to the revels of Siva and Parvati, and the impious Hindu who dares to intrude is consumed instantly to ashes. The two great ceremonies are the Neyyāttam and the Elanīrāttam, the pouring of ghee (clarified butter) and the pouring of the
milk of the green cocoanut. The former is performed [564]
by the Nāyars, who attend the festival first, and the
latter by Tiyans. In May, all roads lead to Kottiyūr, [785]
and towards the middle of the month the ghee pourers, [783]
as the Nāyar pilgrims are called, who have spent the previous four weeks in fasting and purificatory rites, assemble in small shrines subordinate to the Kottiyūr temple. Thence, clad in white, and bearing each upon his head a pot of ghee, they set forth in large bodies headed by a leader. At Manattana the pilgrims from all parts of Malabar meet, and thence to Kottiyūr
the procession is unbroken. However long their jour- [195]
ney, the pilgrims must eat only once, and the more filthy their language, the more orthodox is their conduct. As many as five thousand pots of ghee are poured over the lingam every year. After the Neyyāttam ceremony, the Nāyars depart, and it is the turn of the Tiyans. Their preparations are similar to those of the Nāyars, and their language *en route* is even more startling.
Eruvatti near Kadirūr is the place where most of them [782]
assemble for their pilgrimage, and their green cocoanuts are presented gratis by the country people as an offering to the temple. The Elanīrāttam ceremony begins at midnight, and the pilgrims heap up their cocoanuts in front of the shrine continuously till the evening of the

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788 same day. Each Tiyan then marches thrice round the heap, and falls prostrate before the lingam ; and a certain Nāyar sub-caste removes the husks preparatory to the
[789] spilling of the milk. The festival finally closes with a mysterious ceremony, in which ghee and mantrams play a great part, performed for two days consecutively by the presiding Nambūdiri, and Kottiyūr is then deserted for another year."

"A shrine," Mr. Fawcett continues, "to which the Malayālis, Nāyars included, resort is that of Subramania at Palni in the north-west corner of the Madura district about a week's march from the confines of Malabar near
[765] Palghat. Not only are vows paid to this shrine, but men,
[302] letting their hair grow for a year after their father's
[782] death, proceed to have it cut there. The plate shows an ordinary Palni pilgrim. The arrangement which he
796 is carrying is called a kāvadi. There are two kinds of
788 kāvadi, a milk kāvadi containing milk, and a fish kāvadi
782 containing fish, in a pot. The vow may be made in respect of either, each being appropriate to certain circumstances. When the time comes near for the pilgrim to start for Palni, he dresses in reddish orange cloths, shoulders his kāvadi, and starts out. Together with a man ringing a bell, and perhaps one with a tom-tom, with ashes on his face, he assumes the rôle of a beggar. The well-to-do are inclined to reduce the beggar period to the minimum ; but a beggar every votary must be, and as a beggar he goes to Palni in all humbleness and humiliation, and there he fulfils his vow, leaves his kāvadi and his hair, and a small sum of money. Though the individuals about to be noticed were not Nāyars, their cases illustrate very well the religious idea of the Nāyar as expressed under certain circumstances, for between the Nāyars and these there

is in this respect little if any difference. It was at Guruvayūr 796
in November, 1895. On a high raised platform 788
under a peepul tree were a number of people under 782
vows, bound for Palni. A boy of 14 had suffered as a child from epilepsy, and seven years ago his father vowed on his behalf that, if he were cured, he would make the pilgrimage to Palni. He wore a string of beads round his neck, and a like string on his right arm. These were in some way connected with the vow. His head was bent, and he sat motionless under his kâvadi, leaning on the bar, which, when he carried it, rested on his shoulder. He could not go to Palni until it was revealed to him in a dream when he was to start. He had waited for this dream seven years, subsisting on roots (yams, etc.), and milk—no rice. Now he had had the long-looked-for dream, and was about to start.
Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of 796
silver over the lower portion of the forehead, almost 788
covering his eyes; his tongue protruding beyond the 785
teeth, and kept in position by a silver skewer through it. The skewer was put in the day before, and was to be left in for forty days. He had been fasting for two years. He was much under the influence of his god, and whacking incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement. Several of the pilgrims had a handkerchief tied over
the mouth, they being under a vow of silence. One [782]
poor man wore the regular instrument of silence, the mouth-lock—a wide silver band over the mouth, and a skewer piercing both cheeks. He sat patiently in a nice tent-like affair, about three feet high. People fed him with milk, etc., and he made no effort to procure food, relying merely on what was given him. The use of the mouth-lock is common with the Nâyars when they assume the pilgrim's robes and set out for Palni;

opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman 796
caste, styled Kūli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of 788
being the first to begin the work of polluting the Bhoot 184
or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary [564]
to enter. Cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The [782]
worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water, he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nāyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyars [564]
and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years.' It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans opens the festival by solemnly making a fæcal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling."

Of the cock festival at Cranganore, the following 796
account is given by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar* in his 778
interesting little book on Malabar and its folk. "In 776
the midst of its native charms is situated a temple dedicated to Kali, the goddess who presides over the infectious diseases, cholera and small-pox. She is a [753]
virgin goddess, whom no quantity of blood will satisfy. The temple is an old-fashioned one, presenting no striking architectural peculiarities. The priestly classes [564]
attached to it are not, as usual, Brāhmins, but a peculiar [795]
sect called Adigals, of whom there are but three families [793]
in the whole of Malabar. The Brāhmins are purposely excluded from participation in the poojah ceremonies,

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* Malabar and its Folk, Madras, 1900.

776
796 lest their extreme sanctity might increase the powers
778 of the goddess to a dangerous extent. Poojahs are
[793] daily offered to her. An annual festival known as the
[782] Bharani, connected with this goddess, plays a most
important part in the religious history of Malabar. It
comes off in the Malayalam month of Meenam (about
788 March or April). Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple
796 on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the
pilgrims, and their friends and relations, from the
perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people
resort thither annually by thousands from almost all
parts of Malabar; and, the more north you go, the
stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has
[782] upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory
offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of
cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking
this sacred mission. People arrange to start
on it at an auspicious moment, on a fixed day in
small isolated bodies. Preparations are made for the
journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves
and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper, and,
above all, a number of cocks form an almost complete
paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all
gathered and preserved in separate bundles inside a large
[293] bag. When the appointed hour comes, they throw this
bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their
[481] girdles, and, with a native-fashioned umbrella in the one
hand and a walking-stick in the other, they start, each
from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at
the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically
[533] by common consent. Then commences the vociferous
recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads,
which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman
it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others

in equally loud and profuse strains. This is continued 788
right up till the beginning of their homeward journey. 796
Nobody whom they come across on the way can successfully escape the coarse Billingsgate of these religious zealots. Even women are not spared. Perhaps it is in their case that the pilgrims wax all the more eloquently vulgar. A number of cock's feathers are stuck or tied upon the tip of a stick, and with this as a wand they begin to dance and pipe in a set style, which is extremely revolting to every sense of decency. Some of the pilgrims walk all the distance to the temple, while others go by boat or other conveyance; but in neither case do they
spare any passer-by. Hundreds of gallons of arrack and [273]
toddy are consumed during the festival. The pilgrims reach the temple in their dirty attire. The temple
premises are crowded to overflowing. The worship of 788
the goddess is then commenced. The offerings consist 796
of the sacrifice of cocks at the temple altar, turmeric 782
powder, but principally of pepper, as also some other objects of lesser importance. A particular spot inside the temple is set apart for the distribution of what is called manjal prasadam (turmeric powder on which divine blessings have been invoked). The work of doling it out is done by young maidens, who are during the process subjected to ceaseless volleys of vile and vulgar abuse. Now, leaving out of account the minor ceremonies, we come to the principal one, viz., the sacrifice of cocks. The popular idea is that the greater the number of cocks sacrificed, the greater is the efficacy of the pilgrimage. Hence men vie with one another in the number of cocks that they carry on the journey. The sacrifice is begun, and then there takes place a regular scramble for the sanctified spot reserved for this butchering ceremony. One man holds a cock by the

788
796 trunk, and another pulls out its neck by the head, and, in
782 the twinkling of an eye, by the intervention of a shar-
pened knife, the head is severed from the trunk. The
blood then gushes forth in forceful and continuous jets,
and is poured on a piece of granite specially reserved.
Then another is similarly slaughtered, and then as many
as each of the pilgrims can bring. In no length of
time, the whole of the temple yard is converted into one
horrible expanse of blood, rendering it too slippery to be
safely walked over. The piteous cries and death throes of
the poor devoted creatures greatly intensify the horror of
the scene. The stench emanating from the blood mixing
with the nauseating smell of arrack renders the occasion
796 all the more revolting. One other higher and more
788 acceptable kind of offering requires more than a passing
755 mention. When a man is taken ill of any infectious
782 disease, his relations generally pray to this goddess for
his recovery, solemnly covenanting to perform what
goes by the name of a thulabharum ceremony. This
consists in placing the patient in one of the scale-pans
of a huge balance, and weighing him against gold, or
more generally pepper (and sometimes other substances
as well), deposited in the other scale-pan. Then this
weight of the substance is offered to the goddess. This
is to be performed right in front of the goddess in
788 the temple yard. The usual offerings being over, the
796 homeward journey of the pilgrims is begun. Though
the festival is called Bharani, yet all the pilgrims must
vacate the temple on the day previous to the Bharani
[776] day. For, from that day onwards, the temple doors are
all shut up, and, for the next seven days, the whole place
is given over to the worst depredations of the countless
demons over whom this blood-thirsty goddess holds
sway. No human beings can safely remain there, lest

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783 PURIFICATION AND EXPIATION--practices reflecting a sense of contamination or guilt; concept of ritual uncleanness; things and persons considered unclean or impure; purification rites (e.g., ritual ablutions and bathing); concepts of sin, salvation, and redemption; riddance of sin (e.g., confession, remission, atonement, penance, scapegoat); etc. See also:

Elimination	514
Personal hygiene	515
Ideas about unclean castes	564
Definitions of acts regarded as sinful	673
Punishment of ritual offenses	688
Conception of pollution, contagion, and loathsome diseases	753
Ideas about corpses	764
Ideas about sexual intercourse	833
Ideas about menstrual blood	841
Ideas about the exuviae of childbirth	844

564 rank came certain small castes of middle class,
794 non-military Nayars whose work was connected
with temples. Vattekads were oil-mongers for
temples, Odatt Nayars, temple tile-makers;
and Andura Nayars temple pot-makers. One
Vattekad lineage was present in each village to
supply oil to the temple; its members might receive good from all the higher castes but might
not give to them. Often, the headman of the
Vattekad lineage was also the shaman of the Na-
[791] yar Bhagavadi temple. Odatt and Andura Nayars
were very small castes, usually with one lineage
to about six villages.

564 Below the middle class Nayars in rank came
three castes of servant-Nayars, also non-mili-
[764] tary: Chidigans or funeral priests of the higher
matrilineal castes, Veluthedans or washermen
[305] of all the castes above them; and Vilakkatara-
[896] vans or barbers of all the castes above them.
One lineage of each of these castes was usually
present in each village. Chidigans ranked above
barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank
and would not interdine or intermarry.

[341] In each village, all of the castes so far mentioned (provided they were present) were called
"high," "good" [24] or "clean" castes and lived
in a separate portion of the village, each house
in its own large garden, round the temples and
the local janmi's house. Except for Nayar barbers and washermen, all might enter either Nambudiri or Nayar temples. Within this group,
[783] lower castes were forbidden to touch higher
castes because of ritual pollution, but individuals
of different castes might approach each other
within a few feet,

514 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
[214] only between members of the same caste or sub-caste,
but at a higher caste feast members of
lower castes might receive food from higher
caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs,
temple servants, retainers, middle-class and
servant Nayars thus collectively formed the
"good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and
[611] two small castes of their temple servants were
patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
part of the village, were the "low" or "polluting"
[783] castes. These included in order of rank,
● Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with
20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (astrologers)
with one to three households per village;
the artisan castes (blacksmiths, goldsmiths,
carpenters, bell-metal workers and
stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one
to three houses per village; low caste washermen
and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one
to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each
with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,
[611] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
[595] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal extended
[614] families with fraternal polyandrv, cross-cut
by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal
clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal
descent with patrilocal extended families and
[837] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked
for each other and for the "good" castes of the
514 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influential,
427 owned their own house-sites and leased rice-lands
and other garden lands from the matrilineal

564 kanam tenants of the village, on a triennial tenure
427 (verum-pattam) retaining about one-fifth of
the produce for their own sustenance and paying
564 the rest as rent in kind. One or more small
437 patrilineal groups of each of the other castes had
what was called a desam avakasam or "village
right," namely the right to work exclusively for
members of their natal village. Sometimes, in
the case of small castes such as astrologers and
barbers, the right might extend to several adjacent
villages who collectively shared the labour
of one servant family. Avakasams were hereditary
in patrilineal groups; they involved payment
in paddy and vegetables by each patron household,
of whatever caste, after the two harvests
of the year, and the right to take part in village
festivals and be fed at higher caste festivals and
marriages.

[791] Astrologers and artisans were hired by all the
higher castes of the village, by each other and
[305] by Iravas who ranked above them. Barbers
worked for all the lower polluting castes of this
group, but not for the "good" castes who employed
[296] the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered
for all the lower polluting castes but not regularly
for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar
washerman; however, the low [26] caste washerman's
lineage must provide clean cloths for the
"good" castes after death, menstruation and
childbirth and had ritual obligations to high
caste women on the two latter occasions. Bowmakers
564 served Nayars and Iravas. Each of the
●783 lower polluting castes was endogamous and interdined
equally only within the caste. Rules of

564 ritual pollution decreed that the several lower
783 castes might not touch each other, and that members
of each lower caste, according to their ritual
rank, must refrain from approaching members
of the "good" castes within distance ranging
from 15 to 40 feet.

564 Finally, on the outskirts of the village, in a
[361] separate area, lived the serf-castes of Parayas
437 and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket
and umbrella-makers; in each village two or
three households had a village right to serve all
castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the
agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple-servants
and Nambudiris. Each property-group of these
castes owned one or more families of Pulayas
as its ancestral property who could be bought
and sold. Food, household materials and clothing
were provided for serfs by their owners. The
Pulayas were freed by law in 1850, since when
they have been landless agricultural labourers
serving the "good" castes and Iravas for daily
[783] wages in kind. As "exterior" castes, Parayas
and Pulayas may not approach "good" castes
within a distance of about 60 feet and may not
enter the "good" area of the village or walk on
the main roads. (These rules were however
abolished by law at Independence in 1947.) [27]
Each caste is endogamous and the two may not
[611] interdine. Unlike the higher castes they have a
bilateral kinship system without unilineal descent
groups. In addition to these Hindu castes
361 there were and are in Kerala large groups of
563 Muslims and Christians. (2) Christians had
their separate villages and were divided into
castes in a similar manner to Hindus. Muslims

361 lived in bazaar streets in the towns, or some-
563 times in separate villages, where they were served by low caste Hindu labourers; alternatively small groups of them might occupy Hindu villages where they had the ritual rank of Iravas (from whom they were chiefly converted), and usually held lands on the same terms of triennial tenure from Nayar kanakker.

564 The lower polluting castes and the exterior
783 castes had their own small temples, dedicated
to their own deities. They were forbidden to
approach the temples of the "good" castes and
564 might not take part in daily worship there. An-
796 nually, however, a large temple festival was
571 held in each Nayar, chiefly or royal Bhagavadi
temple. At such a festival, representatives of all the lower castes of the village attended and performed ceremonies and dances peculiar to their caste at approriate distances from the temple. Such festivals apparently reinforced the mutual rights and obligations of the several castes and dramatized the solidarity and also the social distance between them. In accordance with the normal range of their social relations, members of the lower castes usually attended such festivals only in their own or adjacent villages. At the festivals of the chiefly temple of the nad, however, members of "good" castes throughout the nad were required to participate; similarly, at festivals of the royal temples, representatives of the "good" castes throughout the kingdom were called to attend and express their allegiance to the ruler and his deity.

000 ritual and other social cooperation.

613 (2) Ritual Cooperation in the Lineage

783 In addition to the joint performance of the pre-puberty marriage rite, members of a lineage were united in ritual observances at a birth or death. On each of these occasions, all members fell for fourteen days into a condition of ritual pollution (pula) in which they might not touch, eat with, or enter into the houses of other members of their caste, enter the public temples or bathing pools of the village, enter their own ancestor shrines, sacred snake groves or other sacred places of their lineage, or take part in everyday social life. This period of ritual pollution resembled one of temporary excommunication from caste, the only difference being that those ostracized were regarded by others with special friendliness rather than hostility. It effectively set apart the lineage as a solidary group at times of crisis in its history, and gave recognition to their joint concern with increase or decrease in their membership.

613 Lineage members were also united in worship
794 of the lineage goddess or dharma devi ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess, named differently in different lineages, is a species of the common Nayar goddess Bhagavadi, and in this context was probably though of as a primeval ancestress of the lineage, though I lack data definitely to indicate this. Her idol was housed in a small shrine in the precincts of the oldest ancestral house, or sometimes in the courtyard of the village temple. She was believed capable of

exponents. Marriages at all levels between the religious and secular 564
hierarchies pointed up this interdependence. 613

Among the Nayars hypergamy must also have cemented lord-vassal relationships. Older Nayars still take pride in the fact that their lineages have for centuries been fathered by chiefs, royals, and Brahmans. Traditionally, it was for the sake of this generalized filial bond that they were prepared to die in battle and, paradoxically, to deny themselves paternal rights in their own children.

Matrilineal Units of the Nayar Retainer Castes

THE CLAN

The clan was the largest matrilineal unit to which a Nayar commoner 614
belonged. Its members believed themselves descended from a common ancestress, but her name was not normally remembered and the exact genealogical relationships between a clan's subordinate segments
were often unknown. Occasionally, all of a clan's known [621]
members lived within a single Nayar neighborhood (*tara*). In this case the clan was co-terminous with the next lower order of matrilineal unit, which I call the lineage. More commonly, the clan had a nucleus of members within the neighborhood from which it originally sprang, together with outlying segments whose forebears had moved to other neighborhoods of the chiefdom. Clan affiliations among Nayar retainers do not seem to have extended beyond the chiefdom.

The clan was called a *taravād*, the word also used for the lineage [192]
and the matrilineal household unit. "Taravād" is derived from "tara," [613]
meaning "mound,"[6] in this case the raised foundation on which a [592]
Nayar house was built. Its members derived a sense of unity from the [342]
belief that their matrilineal forebears sprang from the same ancestral house, and if the site of this house still existed they retained a sentimental attachment to it. The word "taravād" (befitting for a settled agricultural people) was in fact equivalent to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and of place. The clan was usually called by the name of its original ancestral house site.

The clan was exogamous and sex relations within it were forbidden. [834]
Those of its members who lived near and met often used kinship [601]
terms to address each other. If a death or birth occurred, clan members [203]
had to be informed by messenger. Upon receipt of the informa- [764]
[844]

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[6] Any kind of raised foundation of earth or laterite is called a tara. Tara (meaning "neighborhood") is derived from the large platform of earth round a sacred "milk" [783] -exuding tree (*alstonia scholaris*) located near the Nayar neighborhood temple of Bhagavadi. The neighborhood assembly congregated on this mound.

[623]

614 764 844 783 tion they entered for fifteen days into a condition of ritual pollution. They might not eat with nor touch other Nayars, enter the temple or other houses, bathe in the public bathing pools of their caste, or eat meat or salt. Death pollution, and to a milder degree birth pollution, cut off the clan from participation in the social life of the caste. It isolated the members as a group set apart in a special and dangerous ritual condition, who had to observe taboos for their own and each others' safety. Its observance stressed the kinship connection of clansmen and marked their common concern on the occasion of an increase or decrease in their membership. Only those clansmen living within the neighborhood, however, were obliged to attend a funeral or visit a house of birth. Beyond these observances clansmen had only loosely defined rights of hospitality in each other's homes. As far as I am aware they never assembled as an organized group.

614 In time a clan might divide into two or more clans by the common consent of its members. The decision to separate depended both on geographical distance and on distance of relationship. If a segment of the core unit moved into an adjacent neighborhood its members might maintain clanship with the parent lineage for several hundred years thereafter. If they moved to a distant part of the district (say, fifteen miles away) their grandchildren might sever the connection. Severing clanship was called "cutting the pollution bond." Representatives of the branches met and decided not to inform each other of future deaths in their respective groups. Usually the outlying branch would soon afterward adopt the name of the oldest ancestral house site in its own vicinity as its clan name. Exogamy was theoretically preserved as long as matrilineal ties were remembered—usually, about three generations after the division.

Beyond the neighborhood, clan ties had no legal or economic concomitants and were relatively unimportant, their claims being subordinated to those of lineage, village, neighborhood, district, and kingdom.

THE LINEAGE

613 A lineage comprised those members of a clan living in one Nayar neighborhood, and it operated within the legal and social framework of this unit. As we have noted, the retainer Nayars of a neighborhood were of the same caste. They interdined and intermarried freely and the neighborhood was their unit of caste administration. A neighborhood might comprise the retainer Nayars of one village or of two or three adjacent villages, or occasionally Nayars of only part of a large village (e.g., a royal village) in which more than one caste of

613 small neighborhoods, indeed, all the lineages were sometimes enangar
476 to one another, although this seems to have been rare. At least one
man and one woman of each of its enangar lineage had to visit a
household for the life-crisis rites of its members, at which they gave
[553] ceremonial assistance and partook of a feast. These rites included the
naming ceremony of a baby, the first rice feeding in the sixth month,
[588] the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, the first menstruation ceremony
[881] of a girl, the first pregnancy ceremony of a woman, the offerings to
[843] a departed spirit which closed the period of death pollution, and the
subsequent offerings each year to the spirits of recently dead mem-
[769] bers of a property group on the anniversaries of their deaths. Enangar
[765] also gave neighborly help on the day of a cremation and, during the
[783] fifteen days of death pollution, provided cooked food for the house-
hold of the bereaved.

613 Although whole lineages were linked as enangar to each other, a
linked lineage acted as a collectivity only at the pre-puberty marriage
592 rite, at cremations, and on the sixteenth day after a death. For the
other life crises, each household of a lineage would invite as enangar partners only one household in each of their linked lineages with whom they had special customary ties. Similarly, the members of a household were not obliged to invite other branches of their own lineage to the minor life crises, although they might do so if they wished.

613 The enangar played their most important role at the pre-puberty
588 marriage rite. Every ten to twelve years each lineage held a grand
ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which time all immature girls of the lineage of one generation were ritually married by men of enangar groups. This ceremony, called *tālikettukalyānam* ("*tāli*-tying ceremony") had to be performed for each girl before puberty on pain of her excommunication from caste (Gough, 1955). Before it took place, elders of the assembly selected suitable youths of the enangar lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony each bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every household in the neighborhood, tied a gold ornament (tāli) round the neck of his bride. Each couple was then secluded in a room of the ancestral house for three days and nights, during which, if the girl was old enough, sexual relations might take place. On the fourth day the bridegrooms departed. They had no further obligations to their brides
[885] and did not need to visit them again unless they wished. After the
tāli rite, however, a girl was regarded as having attained the status
of a mature woman, ready to bear children to perpetuate her lineage.

Shortly before or after puberty she might, following the ceremony, 588
enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons with one or more 836
men of her own or an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar 564
man (whether or not he had ever performed the tāli rite) might enter 613
into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate
lower Nayar caste.

These marriage customs are further discussed below. Here it is 613
relevant to point only to the role of the *enangan* bridegroom. Since 564
the enangar stood to the lineage as formal representatives of the local 588
caste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tāli rite as a ceremony 182
of group marriage, in which the caste group as a whole married
the immature girls of the lineage as a whole.

The tāli rite was indeed both a religious and a legal transaction
between the lineage and the enangu or neighborhood group. If a [688]
girl was discovered to have attained puberty before it had been performed,
the assembly forced her property group to expel her and to
perform her funeral rites, for she was thought to be ritually dangerous
to her caste as a whole. For a woman, the tāli which she wore round [885]
her neck until death was therefore a sign that she had been ceremonially
and legally accepted as a mature woman of her lineage and
caste, "cleared" to bear children to perpetuate both groups.

The lineage similarly operated as a unit, and the enangar fulfilled 613
similar roles as formal links with the caste on the occasion of a 564
funeral. All adult males of the lineage who were junior to the deceased 764
attended his cremation, which took place in the southwest
corner of the garden of his house. Representative members of all [783] ●
enangar households also came to help with practical tasks and to
provide ritual objects for the chief mourner's ceremonies, although
they were forbidden to touch or to receive food from the mourners
throughout their period of pollution. In the fifteen days after the 765
death only the deceased's household, assisted by their special enangar 613
households, took part in the collection of the bones and ashes and 783
made offerings to the departed spirit. Other lineage members observed 782
death pollution in their homes and were attended by enangar
there. On the fifteenth day the lineage reassembled at the house of the
dead. After many ceremonies its members were purified by the funeral
priest from the pollution of death. On the sixteenth day final offerings
were made to the spirit. The deceased's household then held a large 613
feast, which was shared by lineage members and representatives from 765
all houses of the linked lineages. This reception of food by the enangar 564
from the hands of the deceased's matrilineal kinsmen marked a 783

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564 formal recognition that the bereaved lineage, freed from its death
765 pollution, had been received back into the normal social life of the
783 caste.

Lineage members were also united in worship of their lineage
613 goddess or *dharma devi* ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess,
776 named differently in different lineages, was a species of the common
794 Nayar goddess Bhagavadi. Her idol was housed in a small shrine near
the oldest ancestral house or sometimes in the courtyard of the village
temple. She was believed capable of inflicting or withholding sickness
[782] and all types of misfortune. To ward them off, members
propitiated her with offerings of cooked food every year. The astrologer
might also advise an emergency propitiation. She had the power
[588] to bless women of the lineage with fertility. On this account she was
[842] worshipped before a tāli rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies
of a girl. In a somewhat vague sense, moreover, lineage members
appear to have felt themselves collectively responsible to the
[753] goddess for sins or ritual lapses on the part of one of them. It was believed
that if any member failed to observe the religious laws of
[626] caste, to perform household duties correctly, or to revere the goddess,
[784] she might bring sickness or misfortune upon the lineage as a whole.

613 In spite of this sense of collective moral responsibility, the evidence
is unclear as to whether the lineage as a whole was held legally
681 responsible for any of its member's acts. It is true that the enangar
564 were the legal representatives of the local caste unit in its relations
with the lineage. This inter-lineage relationship was hereditary and obligatory. It could not be entered into or permanently broken without the consent of the assembly and the chief of the district. If, moreover, an individual infringed a religious law of the caste, it was
[692] the duty of his lineage's enangar to summon a caste assembly to judge
[623] and punish the offense. Crimes, which were also sins, against caste law included incest within the lineage; dining or sex relations with prohibited lower-caste persons; failure to perform the marriage rite of a girl before she reached puberty; failure to observe pollution at the birth or death of a lineage member or (on the part of an individual woman) during menstruation; failure to pay dues in kind to the Nayar temple of the neighborhood. On being apprized of an offense, the assembly's first recourse was temporarily to ostracize the offender's household from the caste community. Ostracism meant that the offenders might not enter the temple, bathe in public bathing pools, enter the houses of other Nayars, employ the village servant

613

castes, or receive customary help from their enangar at life-crisis 681
ceremonies. If the ostracism was not effected it was believed that the 564
whole neighborhood would fall into disfavor with the caste goddess
and might become prey to epidemic or crop failure. [784]

The point on which I am uncertain is whether the lineage as a 613
whole was ostracized, or whether other branches of the lineage
normally retained their caste status by severing their own connections 681
with the offender's property group. The latter actually occurred in a 684
case in Cochin in 1924. A Sudra Nayar woman had sex relations with 564
a man of the caste of Nayar funeral priests. Shortly after the assembly
met, the other houses of her lineage repudiated all connection with
the offender's household, which alone remained ostracized for a year.
The woman and her lover then fled to Malaya. The household paid its
fine and was reaccepted to caste. I do not know whether it was possible under native rule for a lineage to repudiate its responsibilities
in this way.

Minor offenses, such as dining with low-caste people, were settled 613
by the offender's property group paying a fine to the village temple. 681
The offender and his household were purified from their pollution by 564
certain ritual acts. They then gave a feast to their enanger at which
they were publicly reaccepted to caste. Traditionally, graver offenses [783]
(such as the one above) met harsher penalties. The caste's judgment [574]
on such an offense traditionally had to be ratified by the district
chief or by a royal officer. The offender was then either executed by
his immediate matrilineal kin or surrendered to the king for sale into
slavery. His household members performed his funeral rites and only
then were they taken back into caste.

Whether or not the lineage as a whole was held collectively responsible for offenses against the religious law of the caste, it was
not held responsible for civil wrongs judged by the village headman
or for crimes judged by the chief or by officers of the royal court. The
property group, headed by its kāranavan, and not the whole lineage,
was responsible in cases of theft, debt, or other offenses concerning
property which were judged by the village headman. With regard to 613
a major crime, a Nayar who murdered another was tried in the court
of the king or of a higher chief. If the murdered man was of the same 682
or a higher caste than the murderer, the murderer was executed by a [696]
small group of Nayars selected by the judge. If the murdered man was
of lower caste, the murderer's property group had to pay a fine to
the district chief. Again, if a Nayar of any rank committed treason etc

613 If he wished, a girl's ritual bridegroom might later visit her as one
588 of a series of husbands, but he had no prior claims and was not
765 obliged to do so. The woman in turn owed no obligations to him
except that at his death, she and all her children by whatever bio-
983 logical fathers must observe fifteen days of ritual pollution for him.
Ritual pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin.
Until modern times it was not observed by a woman and her children
for a visiting husband who was not also the woman's ritual husband.
601 In addition, if they knew him, a woman's children called her ritual
husband by the Dravidian word *appan*, the term used for the father
in the patrilineal castes. Their mother's visiting husbands they called
by the Sanskrit term *acchan;* this word means "leader" or "lord" and
was also sometimes applied as a title to village headmen and military
leaders.

836 After the tāli rite and shortly before or after puberty, a woman
837 might enter into a number of sexual relationships with men of her
local caste group or of an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar
564 might visit a number of wives of his own or an appropriate lower
Nayar caste. Among retainer Nayars, by far the majority of unions
were between persons of the same caste. A very few favored women
had husbands from the lineages of temple servants, village headmen,
chiefs, or royalty, or from houses of Nambudiri Brahmans of relatively
low rank. A smaller number of Nayar retainers had wives in the lower-
ranking castes of Nayar temple menials, but not in the servant castes
of Nayar washermen and barbers, which were endogamous.

595 It is not certain how many husbands a woman might have at one
837 time; various writers [8] of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries mention
between three and twelve (Logan, 1951, I: 136–137). Others add that
175 women "never refused themselves" to occasional Brahman or Nayar
visitors of appropriate rank. It seems probable that each woman had
a small number of husbands from her local caste group who, while
their relationship lasted, visited her regularly, but that women also
received occasional fleeting visits from itinerant Nayars of appropriate
rank, perhaps mainly during military operations.

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113 [8] See, for example, Abdu 'r Razzak (1441), Nicolo di Conti (1444), Hieronimo de Santo Stephano (1563), and Cesar Fredericke (1563), in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 22, 1857; Duarte Barbosa (1518) and Joao de Barros (early sixteenth century) in Dames, 1921, II: 124, 241; Ludovico di Varthema (1503–1508), tr. J. W. Jones, 1863; 146; Zein-ud-Deen (1579), tr. Rowlandson, 1833: 63; J. H. van Linschoten (1596) in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 71: 279; Pietro della Valle (1624), Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 85: 579; Hamilton (1727), ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 310; Buchanan, 1807, II: 411.

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754 particular marriage, for the spouses, unable to bear the machinations
613 of their relatives, would often end their relationship.

586 I have called these Nayar institutions "marriage" because they
limited and regulated sexual relationships and because they served
581 to legitimize children. The provisions of both the tāli rite and the
588 sambandham were directed toward these ends. The tāli rite was both
a legal and a ritual institution. First, it symbolically conferred sexual
and procreative powers upon the girl. The mock menstrual seclusion,
the rites to the fertility goddess, and the "defloration" all indicate this.
Second, it took the sexual rights in a girl away from her matrilineal
kinsmen as soon as they had been conferred. This appears in that the
[835] girl and her elder matrilineal kinsmen must observe the rules of
etiquette associated with incest prohibitions from the day of the
tāli rite. Third, it transferred the sexual (but not the procreative)
rights in the girl to a representative of her caste in the person of an
enangan. Fourth, however, this man at once renounced his rights in
his capacity as an individual, after which they became available to
men of the caste, and of appropriate higher castes, as a group. All of
this was accomplished in good time *before* the girl actually attained
puberty and was capable of entering fruitfully into sexual liaisons. It
[834] was strictly forbidden for a man to have relations with a girl before
her tāli rite, and if the rite was not performed before puberty she
was expelled from caste.

595 With regard to the sambandham institution, sex relations were not
834 promiscuous. They were forbidden within the lineage, within a
certain range of affines (discussed below), and, most categorically,
851 with men of lower caste. It was therefore necessary to have some
procedure for legitimizing children, to show that they had been
fathered by men standing in the appropriate roles. The legally obligatory
payments by husbands at the time of birth accomplished
this, and if no one could be found to make the payments, the woman
and child were expelled from the caste.

595 It was appropriate that a woman should wear the tāli throughout
her life and that she and her children should observe death pollution
[765] for the ritual husband rather than for any particular visiting husbands.
[783] For neither the ritual husband nor the visiting husbands had rights
in the woman *as individuals*, nor had the woman or her children individual
[564] rights in them. After renouncing his individual rights, however,
the ritual husband remained for life, in relation to this woman,
the representative of his caste, which in law had collectively married
her and collectively fathered her children.

As a form of group marriage, the Nayar institutions clearly will not 581
fit the definition of marriage proposed in *Notes and Queries* in 85
Anthropology.[9] It did, however, legitimize children, which seems to 121
me the minimum necessary criterion applicable to all those unions which anthropologists customarily label "marriage." As a new definition of marriage which will cover all the familiar types, the Nayar case, and several other unusual cases which are commonly recognized as marriage, I have suggested the following: "Marriage is a relationship between a woman and one or more other persons which provides that a child born to the woman, under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, shall be accorded full birth-status rights in his society or social stratum" (Gough, 1959: 32).

Nayar men seem always to have chosen wives younger than them- 582
selves. A man ranked above his wife, who had to show respect to
him. In the presence of her kin she remained standing before him 593
and seldom spoke to him; she would not be seen talking to him in 576
public outside her home. A woman never used her husband's name; [551]
she addressed and referred to him by plural honorific pronouns.
Hypergamous marriage relationships were even more formal than
those between Nayars. Caste rules of pollution prevented the husband [564]
from receiving food from his wife's kinsfolk. During the daytime, [183]
after taking his purifying bath in the morning, he was forbidden to
touch her or any member of her family.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The most peculiar characteristic of the Central Nayars is that al- 595
though a form of marriage existed they did not institutionalize the elementary family of one man, one woman, and their children. This group was in no sense a legal, residential, commensal, productive, or distributive unit. An individual man had no legal rights in a particular wife and her children. He did not reside with them, did not eat regularly with them, did not produce with or for them, and he did
not customarily distribute goods to his children. A woman had no [851]
legal rights in a particular man—only the right that one *or more* men admit paternity of her children. Similarly, a child correctly begotten was assured of legal paternity, but a group of men might fulfill this role and the child had no subsequent claims on any of them. It might perhaps be claimed that the group composed of the tāli tier, his ritual wife, and her children born subsequently received cere-

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[9] "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both parents" (*Notes and Queries*, 1951: 110).

androus and divorce was freely practiced, but a princess probably did 595
not regularly entertain more than one husband at a time. Older Nambudiri 554
Brahman husbands often introduced their own younger kinsmen [586]
into the palace; for this reason both matrilateral cross-cousin
marriage and paternal parallel-cousin marriage were common in Brahman-royal unions. Princes, chiefs, and high-ranking Nambudiri Brahmans were sometimes polygynous. Their wives, however, were probably seldom polyandrous; for aristocrats seem often to have exercised the power to monopolize the attentions of their favorite Nayar wives. They were therefore more sure of the paternity of their Nayar sons, upon whom they sometimes conferred military or political offices.

In all hypergamous unions the husband observed the normal all-India 564
caste rules of pollution except with regard to sexual intercourse. 602
He might not receive food from his wife's caste and had little communication 598
with her or her children in the daytime. Affinal relationships
were correspondingly more restricted than in the retainer castes, 554
for a woman had very little communication with her husband's natal [833]
kin; she and her children used no kinship terms for them. If the wife [783]
was of lower social as well as ritual rank than the husband she did not visit his natal home. Conversely, princesses do not seem to have demeaned themselves socially by visiting the homes of their ritually higher-ranking husbands. A Nayar wife who was of similar social rank to her Brahman or temple-servant husband might occasionally visit the womenfolk of his home, but she was received in an outbuilding and might not eat with them. Similarly, husbands in hypergamous unions had highly formalized and restricted relationships with the matrilineal kinsmen of their wives. The wives' elder kinsmen were accorded the respect due their age; the husband, that due his superior ritual rank.

Relationships between matrilineal kin among the aristocrats were a 602
sharpened version of those found among retainer Nayars. Between 576
men, the etiquette associated with age rank was highly stereotyped. 554
Among the senior princes who were likely to compete for political office it reached the point of avoidance, a condition facilitated by their separate residences as sthānis. The etiquette of respect was similarly elaborated between men and women. After the age of fifteen a prince might converse with older women of his palace only by appointment and in some public place. He must scrupulously avoid the
presence of younger kinswomen from the time of their *tāli* rite. In [154]
the potentially larger property groups of the aristocrats these rules [835]
of etiquette obviously militated against the expression of aggression
between men as well as preventing incestuous relations between the sexes.

the father's village, if this was different from the mother's. In this 614
way, matrilineal kin might become widely scattered between many 564
villages, while remembering the village from which their matrilineal 591
forebears sprang.

THE SUB-CLAN

This group corresponded to the clan in Central Kerala. It was a 614
segment of the clan whose members seem to have been located within [634]
one chiefdom. The structure and functions of this group were identical [765]
with those of the clan in Central Kerala, the members observing death [844]
and birth pollutions as well as exogamy. [783]

THE LINEAGE

As in Central Kerala, the lineage was that portion of a clan located 613
in one neighborhood (tara). Traditionally there seem to have been
about six to ten lineages in one neighborhood, as in Central Kerala.
A lineage was internally segmented and segmentation was relevant
to the reversion of property. Exogamy, the observance of pollution, [783]
and the extension of kinship terms inhered in the lineage. Perhaps
because village headship was weaker than in Calicut and each commoner
lineage stronger as an organized group of kinsfolk, rites connected
with the lineage were more prominent in the North than in
the Center (Gough, 1958). There were few or no neighborhood [346]
temples of Bhagavadi. Instead, each lineage held a grand annual [796]
festival to its own patron Bhagavadi and to minor male deities, in
which the lower castes took part. We have mentioned blood feuds [776]
between lineages, which indicate that a lineage was, in popular [627]
thought, if not in law, considered responsible for its members' physical
protection.

Little is known today of the enangar relationship in North Kerala. 613
It did exist, and enangar are said to have attended life-crisis rites and 588
to have had some function in neighborhood caste trials of offenders
against religious law. However, enangar did not tie the tālis of immature
girls and did not participate in any form of group marriage.
Among Nambiars and in most of the aristocratic Nayar lineages a
girl's tāli was tied before puberty by some local Nambudiri Brahman.
He was often an old man, and he appears to have had no right of
cohabitation. The woman and her children did not observe pollution [765]
at his death. As far as I can judge the tāli rite in this area was merely [783]
an initiation rite which, at least in the nineteenth century, removed
the ritual danger of cohabiting with a virgin (Gough, 1955). It also [835]
instituted the etiquette associated with incest prohibitions between
the girl and her matrilineal kinsmen.

593 will have had different life experiences. One set of siblings may receive
184 property from their father in which their maternal half-siblings
858 have no legal rights. Each set of full siblings will have important
relationships with its own paternal kin. In many respects, therefore,
[613] children of the same mother by different fathers have a relationship
more comparable to that of the children of two sisters than to that
which obtains between full siblings. However, the ties between
maternal half-siblings are much stronger than those between paternal
half-siblings, who have only a slight relationship. At best, it may be
comparable to that between paternal parallel cousins; at worst it may
be one of open hostility.

768 A woman's claims on her husband's taravād ceased absolutely with
his death. As in Central Kerala, a widow was ceremonially conducted
613 out of her husband's house immediately after the death and could
[764] not enter it thereafter. Husband and wife did not observe death pollution
[783] and did not take part in each other's funeral rites.

Hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages bore some resemblance
591 to those in Central Kerala, although they were never
613 polyandrous. Brahman husbands of royal or chiefly women lived
184 matrilocally at the expense of the palace as in Central Kerala. Royal
and chiefly men, however, brought their lower-ranking wives to live
on their estates in avunculocal residence. The wife and her children
occupied a separate house or else a wing of the palace with separate
[783] cooking arrangements. Husband and wife observed rules of ritual
pollution as in hypergamous marriages in the Central kingdoms.

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THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The kāranavan held ultimate legal control over all his juniors, but
613 their fathers had limited customary rights in and obligations to them.
593 A man was expected to care for his children in his home until they
reached puberty or married. Although their own taravād had a legal
obligation to maintain them in food and clothing, the father's taravād
[867] customarily supplied their day-to-day needs as a matter of pride. The
father was expected to train his small children in manners and morals,
[868] to see that they were taught to write, and to give his sons instruction
593 in cultivation. In return he could ask his children to do small tasks,
could exercise domestic discipline while they stayed with him, and
613 could expect kindness and occasional help from them when he was
[584] old. His consent had to be sought for his children's marriages and he
often arranged the marriage of his daughter, although he could not
[431] override her kāranavan's wishes. Over and above their customary

769

121 like the cult of lineage ghosts, are non-Sanskritic. I discuss the three categories of
613 cults in that order, and then refer briefly to modern changes in the cults.

THE CULT OF LINEAGE GHOSTS

769 Each traditional Nāyar house contains a room devoted to lineage ghosts. Within
353 the shrine are placed small, low stools (*pīṭhams*). On each of these it is believed that
778 a particular ghost comes to sit on the days when offerings are made.

769 In property groups of the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and district
613 chiefs, which own more land than do commoner Nāyars, family histories recorded
in palm leaf documents may contain the names and achievements of twenty or more
554 *ḳāranavans* extending back over two or three hundred years. In such lineages, whose
[217] property groups divide less frequently than do those of commoner Nāyars, the *ḳāranavans'*
[778] spirits are housed in a special building in the courtyard south of the ancestral
house. Commoner Nāyars care somewhat less for their ancestry. Sometimes they have only three or four stools for their lineage ghosts and remember by name only those who died within the last hundred years or whose lives were in some way remarkable. Remarkable *ḳāranavans* are those who fought bravely in battles or received honor from chief or king, those who earned property on behalf of their matrilineal groups, or those who died prematurely through accident, murder, epidemic or suicide.

769 Regular offerings are made only to *ḳāranavans*, for only *ḳāranavans* hold legal
613 authority and only their names tend to appear in documents which survive for posterity.
782 On the advice of the astrologer, however, a *taravād* may, in emergency, propitiate
the ghost of an ancestress or of a man who died before becoming *ḳāranavan*. But such ghosts are always those who died within the lifetime of living members.

769 The lineage ghosts are regularly propitiated[5] on the new moon days of Karkidagam
796 (July-August) and Tulām (October-November). Food is cooked in the kitchen by
613 women of the matrilineal household, and a large portion is placed on a plantain leaf
261 for each of the ghosts. It includes curried meat and vegetables, fried paddy, beaten
rice, fuits, and sweet puddings of various kinds. Toddy and arrack were traditionally
782 served along with the meal. If a dead *ḳāranavan* is known to have enjoyed special
foods during life, he receives a large portion of these foods. Occasionally, even in the past, individual Nāyars have been vegetarians. The spirits of vegetarian *ḳāranavans* may not be served with meat and are housed in a separate shrine. When the dishes are prepared, they are carried quickly to the shrine so that the ghosts may partake of their essence before others have tasted or smelled them. The living *ḳāranavan* places the leaves before the stools in the presence of men junior to him in the property group and then closes the door of the shrine. Age-rank is observed in making the offerings. For each spirit, in addition to its own leaf, is briefly offered the food later placed before the stools of spirits junior to it. Similarly, the vegetables of vegetarian ghosts are first offered to meat eaters who were senior to them, and the vegetables (but not the meat) cooked for meat eating ghosts are first offered to vegetarian ghosts who were their seniors. After a few minutes the *ḳāranavan* reopens the door and distributes the food, to be eaten by all members of the *taravād*.
[783] Women take no part in offering the food and may not enter the ancestral shrine on this day. They are also
[562] forbidden to enter it during menstrual and birth pollutions, and all members are forbidden entry during the fifteen days of pollution following a death.

000 Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravād* might

The Killing or assault of a Nayar

outside the lineage led to feuds between lineages or between larger territorial units. 692
In Cochin, the king had more power than in Kottayam to curtail such feuds or confine [628]
them to organized duels for which a fee must be paid. Minor offences against caste
law, such as dining with low caste persons, were tried by the subcaste assembly of the [688]
village and resulted in temporary excommunication of the offender's property group [564]
and the payment of a fine to the village goddess's temple.

The *ḳāranavan* had the legal right to punish offences within the property group 613
and also those offences against caste law for which the caste held the property group 692
responsible until justice had been done. Incest and murder within the lineage appear [684]
to have been punished by expulsion from the *taravād* by the *ḳāranavan* and from the [682]
caste by the caste assembly. In cases of grave insubordination by a junior member, the
ḳāranavan had the right to deny him maintenance or access to the ancestral house [564]
until he mended his behavior.

Thus the supernatural agents of the village and the *taravād* primarily acted to 692
force the human authorities to carry out their judicial duties. If, for example, the
caste failed to excommunicate the *taravād* of an individual who had sinned against 626
its religious laws, it was believed that the village goddess would strike the village with 613
epidemic, flood, or some such misfortune. Similarly, if incest within the lineage went
undetected or unpunished, the lineage ghosts and the patron goddess might cause the
offenders to die or might bring misfortune on the *taravād* as a whole.

The fact that any member of the *taravād* may suffer as a result of the misdemeanors 613
of any other, carries into the realm of supernatural sanctions the collective respon-
sibility of the *taravād* in social and legal affairs. If a man breaks a ritual rule of the 626
caste, his whole *taravād* is polluted and liable for excommunication. If a death or 783
birth occurs, the whole lineage is temporarily polluted and excluded from normal
social life. At the back of these norms lies the fact that the *taravād* is an economic
and legal corporation. Its property is owned jointly, and the *taravād* is responsible [421]
for the debts of any one member. Its male members must support each other in
feuds against other lineages. It is not surprising that the concept of being members [476]
one of another in secular affairs is projected into the realm of mystical retributions. [628]

The points at which supernatural agents might replace, or act instead of, human
authorities, appear to have been those where a subordinate was wronged by one who was 769
himself a powerful authority and could manipulate the law. Thus lineage ghosts were
probably particularly effective in punishing or setting to rights misdemeanors of the 626
ḳāranavan himself. I am uncertain whether, in traditional law, junior members could 613
sue in court for the deposition of an erring *ḳāranavan*. They certainly possessed this
right in British law, but even so, it was very difficult before 1933 to get rid of a *ḳāranavan*. [694]
The lineage ghosts appear to have provided important sanctions against a *ḳāranavan's* misdoings, for they brought misfortune on a *taravād* whose *ḳāranavan* disgraced
its reputation for hospitality or squandered its property. I was told that the former [787]
custom by which a junior member might be possessed by a ghost and voice its threats
to the *taravād* added force to the complaints of young men who were cheated by
their *ḳāranavans*. The fact that only the *ḳāranavan* may propitiate the lineage ghosts [782]
points up both his responsibility to the ghosts to ensure good conduct and prosperity
in his *taravād*, and also his responsibility to his juniors to ensure the favor of the ghosts.

I have myself recorded no case in which lineage ghosts were believed to have actually prevented a crime on the part of a *ḳāranavan*, as distinct from punishing one. V. K.

Nayar
Nambūdiri Brahmans

769 731 crop and cattle blight. These he continued to explain in terms of a childlike picture of powerful supernatural elders.

It must also be noticed that although there are slight differences in the relation-
769 ships of men and women to lineage ghosts, the ghosts are, in general, far more alike
783 than are matrilineal elders. A man's relation with his mother is very different from
154 that with his mother's brother, and his relations with different mother's brothers are
[562] by no means uniform. Yet the ghosts are collectively regarded as both protective and dangerously punitive. It seems probable, therefore, that a Nāyar reprojects his own supergo onto the standardized, institutionalized image of lineage ghosts which his culture provides him. For the superego, like the ghosts, is a composite of the prohibitions imposed by a number of elders. The superego is also formed in part from the individual's own aggression, which he defends against by projecting it upon the generalized parental image which he has internalized. If this view is correct, reprojection of the harsh superego onto ghosts in times of misfortune must serve to reduce guilt. For the offences which the ghosts ostensibly punish with sickness are often inadvertent or trivial ones, such as failure in the correct performance of rites. The astrologer's diagnosis may thus permit him to focus his generalized guilt (concerning deeper, unconscious aggressive impulses) upon a specific, minor lapse of duty on the part of
[782] himself or one of his kinsmen. He is then able to take practical steps to alleviate his guilt through propitiation of the supernatural agents. The Brahman's offerings on behalf of his ancestors also seem to serve as an alleviation of guilt, but in a different manner. For instead of reprojecting his harsh superego onto ancestral figures, the Brahman apparently projects it wholly outside the area of human relations onto a vindictive god of death, whose hell he believes endangers both his own and his parents' souls. He appears to alleviate his guilt through rites designed to preserve them and himself from this fate.

769 If it is true that the Nāyar reprojects his own superego upon the lineage ghosts,
this would explain why the ghosts are so much more punitive than are living elders.
182 They are thus fitting agents for the infliction of natural misfortunes, which in fact
626 fall more heavily and capriciously than do the punishments of living elders. The fact that all members of the *taravād* are enabled to focus projected aggression and guilt feelings upon the ghosts probably enhances the internal solidarity of the *taravād*, by lifting a portion of these troublesome feelings from inside to outside the group. The cult thus brings together in rites of propitiation these very kinsmen who (in one aspect of their relationship) hate each other, and forges renewed bonds of mutual devotion in the appeasement of beings whom all of them fear.

FUNERALS AND ANNIVERSARIES: THE SANSKRITIC CULTS

76 Although they retained the non-Sanskritic cults of ghosts, the Nāyars long ago
184 adopted many Brahmanical usages in connection with funerals and with rites on the
anniversary of a death. Such usages include cremation rather than burial of the dead,
564 and offerings of rice balls (*bali*), water, and other oblations in the days of pollution following a death. As among Nambūdiri Brahmans, the chief heir, at the end of the period of pollution, enters a period of ascetic mourning (*dīkṣā*) for one year in Cochin and for forty-one days in Kottayam. At the end of this time he may dispose of the bones and ashes in a sacred river. He makes *bali* offerings to the spirit on each day of his mourning, and at its close, performs final offerings which unite the deceased with

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778 hoods are placed in the shrine, and no insect or rat or other
771 animal is killed in the consecrated spot. Even broken
bits of snake images are worshipped and they are set
up in a row. No image or snake-stone is permitted to fall
down, as that is considered to be inauspicious. On the inner
surface of the hood of the snake is carved a seated female figure.

825 These sacred snakes are supposed to be different from the
771 ordinary serpents. They are given the status of benign family
776 deities and are presumed to possess strange powers and the
attribute of gods. They are revered and they deign to live
only under ceremonially pure conditions and surroundings,
accepting only vegetarian offerings and abhorring animal
[782] sacrifice. In contrast mention may be made of the Thlen of the
Khasis which demands human blood as offering. In the event
825 however of their abode being polluted, e. g., by a menstruating
783 woman, the serpents are angered, and unless propitiated may
782 cause disease or harm to the offender. The sacred serpent
776 called *sarpam* is supposed to be small, about 6 to 18 inches
841 in length and is golden in colour. It is highly poisonous
but ordinarily does not do any harm. If properly propitiated
it guards the family and brings good luck and prosperity;
[753] but if neglected, insulted, or otherwise uncared for, it causes
skin disease, leprosy or loss of sight. Such a punishment
is visited on the offender or on his near relatives. As a
[784] consequence certain taboos are attached to the shrines and no
[841] menstruating or pregnant woman may come within six yards
[843] of the shrine, nor should anyone enter it without taking
a bath.

796 The actual worship or *puja* is conducted either once or
782 twice a year. The priest cooks rice in milk and adds
pieces of ripe plantain to it, with a few flowering heads of
the sacred *tulsi* plant dropped in towards the end. The
offering is cooked on a special oven near the *sarpa kavu*
in a bell-metal vessel. Thereafter, the priest pours some water
over the snake idols to ceremonially bathe them and places a
bunch of areca-nut palm in efflorescence on the head of the
image in a diagonal fashion. The idol is then anointed with
turmeric powder and basil leaves and flower petals are

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784 has been explained to me in this way. The Nâyar
woman observes pollution for three days during menstruation.
562 While in her period she may not eat or drink
178 with any other member of the Taravâd, and at the end
of it, that is on the fourth day, she must be purified.
● Purification is known as "mâttu" (change), and it is
783 effected by the washerwoman who, in some parts of South
841 Malabar, is of the *Mannan* or Vannan caste (whose *métier*
564 it is to wash for the Nâyars and Nambûtiris), but who is,
613 as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tîyan caste, giving
486 her, after her bath, *one of her own* clean cloths to wear
(which is called mattu, change of raiment) instead of the
soiled cloth which she takes away to wash. Pollution,
which may come through a death in the family, through
child birth, or menstruation *must* be removed by "mâttu."
There is no avoiding it.* Until it is done, and it *must* be
done on the fourth day, the woman is out of caste. It must
be done in the right way at the right moment under pain
of the most unpleasant social consequences. How that
the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on
a Taravâd by preventing the right person giving "mâttu"
to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not
with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal
inflict deeper injury. Now the Nâyar woman is said to
feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own
part of it, in order to be within reach of "mâttu." My
informant here tells me that the Vannan caste being
peculiar to Malabar, the Nâyar women cannot go where
these are not to be found; and that "mâttu" must be
done by one of that caste. But this is not the rule. I
know from my own observation in the most truly conservative
localities, in Kurumbranâd for instance, where the
Nâyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is
as a rule a Tîyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction
has other roots than those involved in "mâttu."
[123] It does not account for the superstition against crossing
water which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world.
As bearing on this point I may mention that the Nâyar
women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the
river-backwater and come into the town.

564 The Zamorin is the over-lord of the Akattu Chârna
178 clan, and with the decline of his power and influence, it
may be that the women of it have latterly taken more
562 liberty than was formerly possible.

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* More will be said on this point when we come to describe the Tiyans.

The times have changed things a little: a little only 178
because after all the change is on the surface: it is not
radical. Now-a-days, when there is a penal code to deal [671]
with persons who kill others, the Nâyar cannot keep a [595]
concubine of a caste (not a clan) lower than his own
without fear of social ex-communication. The killing, [564]
except perhaps now and then *sub rosâ*, is a thing of the [385]
past.

The custom which permits the woman to cohabit with 582
a man, her equal or superior in caste, has been alluded to
more than once. I will now make some use of the 564
(Government) Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, [127]
published in 1894, which contains much information which is extremely valuable to the anthropologist and the folklorist, and none the worse for being found together with views and opinions with which he cannot agree. One of the points to which the Commission directed special attention was "as to the customs connected with Hindu marriages in Malabar" and the evidence collected respecting these may be accepted as correct, and the delineation of existing custom may be taken as authoritative. Now the custom which permits the man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself prohibits the woman from exercising the same liberty. "This is called the rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulómam* from *anu* = with + *lómam* = *rómam* = the hair: going with the hair or grain. So *Pratilómam* means "going against the hair or grain." According to this usage a Nâyar woman, consorting with a man of a higher caste follows the hair, purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan) or caste, she is guily of *Pratilómam*; and, if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted."

A corollary of this custom is that a Nambûtiri [783]
Brâhman father cannot touch his own children by his
Nâyar consort without bathing afterwards to remove the
pollution. The children in the Marumakkattâyam family [251]
belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, caste.
They are Nâyars, not Nambûtiris; so the Nambûtiri
cannot touch them without pollution.

The rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam* appears to be [184]
observed with the utmost strictness and thoroughness;
one finds it obtaining between members of the same clan
inhabiting different parts of the country. Mention of this

564
613 of cohabitation; and on the fourth day the bridegroom
588 severs his connection with the girl, symbolising divorce
by cutting into two pieces the cloth (called kachai cloth)
[184 which she wears. The tearing of the cloth is, however,
[586] confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of
the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the
[715 divorce, the girl observes death-pollution when her
Manavâlan dies. The same Manavâlan may tie the tâli
[783] on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at any other time; and he may be old or young. He is often an elderly holy Brâhman, who receives a small present for his services. The ceremony is always the occasion of feasting and jollification. The girl may remove the tâli if she likes after the fourth day.

588 In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered to have some right to the girl, but in such a case it has been already considered that he is a proper man to enter into Sambandham with her. It will be as well to remark here that almost invariably amongst the inferior races, the aboriginals so to speak of Malabar, girls are married
[833] (their marriage is consummated) before puberty. The fuss that was made a few years ago (by the shrieking sisterhood) about the age of consent has had no effect there.

613 The tâli-tying ceremony having been performed while
585 the girl is yet a child, the next step in the matter of
[588] her alliance with a man is the arrangement of the Sambandham. As the rule nothing more than the consent of the girl and of her guardian, the Kâranavan of the family, is necessary. There is no religious formality. The tâli-tying ceremony dispenses with everything of the kind. There is, however, in some parts a tendency now-a-days "to surround the occasion of first cohabitation with a more or less elaborate ceremonial." It is quite an informal affair, arranged by the Kâranavans of the two families. Many a time a young fellow of 22 or 24, answering my question whether he had contracted Sambandham with any one, replied that the head of his family had not yet arranged a Sambandham for him. The wishes of the contracting parties—for in great measure it is a contract—and of the heads of the families practically settle the matter. Should the parties find they are unsuited, they part. There is no dragging on under a bondage intolerable to both.

585 **The following account was given by Mr. Chandu**
184 **Menon (a Nâyar) to the Commission. He says:—**

country knife *(pissan kathi)* in his left hand, which he 843
directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice 613
over this knife with his right hand three times, which dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked to pick one out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound [574]
up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family.

"*After Ceremonies.*—At delivery, women of the barber 846
caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this duty 564
is performed by *Vêla* caste women. Pollution is observ- 783
ed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears 613
cloths washed and presented her by a *Vannatti* or woman
of the Vannan * caste. On the fifteenth day is the [844]
purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, [237]
a man of the Atikkurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*pancha gavya*), with gingelly seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath and sits on the ground, near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water out of the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. (I am not aware if this practice is universal, though it certainly obtains in parts of South Malabar and even in North Travancore.) This done, she again plunges herself in the tank or river, from which she emerges thoroughly purified.

"It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo some rite of purification. The babe is placed on the naked floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All members of the *Taravâd* observe pollution for fifteen days immediately following the delivery, during which period they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places.

"*First Birthday Celebration.*—The twenty-seventh day 846
after the child's birth or the first recurring day of the 613
star under which it was born marks the next important 553

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* Over a great part of Malabar she would, however, be of the Tiyan caste.

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765 place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
782 leads the way to a tank, on the banks of which the rice is
613 thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for
[775] if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's
spirit is pleased with the offering; but if somehow it is
[825] thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is
[231] thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it.
The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away.

765 When the ceremony which has been described has
been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day
613 after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the
574 ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the
783 place of cremation. During these seven days no member
[824] of the Taravâd goes to any other house. The house of the dead and all its inmates are under pollution: no outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days the Kâranavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses.

[184] It is said that in some parts of Malabar the visitors
[431] bring with them small presents in money or kind to help the Kâranavan through the expenditure to which the funeral rites necessarily put him.

765 To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that on
613 the third day after the death, all those who are related by
marriage to the Taravâd of the deceased combine and give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours, who are invited, one man or one woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called Patni Karigi. On the seventh day a return feast will be given by the Taravâd of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.

Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
[783] ceremony is observed; but the members of the Taravâd remain under death pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the Sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the Taravâd go to the place of cremation and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried—not burnt by fire in the usual way—cover up

the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and, all 765
following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the nearest 613
river (it must be running water), which receives the remains of the dead. The men then bathe and return home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better [778]
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gâya, Ramêsvaram, or even to some place of sanctity much nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynâd, and there dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or ashes of any one having been taken to Gâya and there deposited in the river, the survivors of the Taravâd have no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. This is called "Ashtagâya Shraddham." It puts an end to the need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living members of the Taravâd, cause miscarriage to the women, possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on.

Then on the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory 765
ceremony. Until this has been done, any one touched 613
by any member of the Taravâd should bathe before he 783
enters his house or partakes of any food. A man of the 584
Athikkurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil in which have been put some gingelly seeds (all together) over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling [765]
and the bath which follows it removes the death pollution. The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his office on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the Taravâd.

In the case of death of a senior member of a Taravâd, 554
well-to-do and reckoned as of some importance, there is 621
the feast called Pinda Atiyantaram on the sixteenth day 765
after death, given to the neighbours and friends. The word neighbours, as used here, does not mean those who live close by., but, owing to the custom of Malabar under which each house is in its own paramba (garden or enclosure) which may be a large one, those of the caste living within a considerable area round about. I am not sure whether in connection with these ceremonies there is mutual assistance in preparation for the funeral; or whether there is any recognized obligation between members of the same amsham, dêsam or tara; or whether this kind of mutual obligation obtains generally between any Taravâd and those of caste round about, irrespective
of s-a boundaries

RELIGION.

771 It will be easier to convey a rational conception of the religion of the Nâyars, not by what is written but by what is left out; so we will proceed on this plan. The ceremonies connected with marriage and death go far towards indicating what are their religious ideas in [181] general. The conservative character of the people of Malabar whose country is an earthly paradise, severed from the major portion of the Indian peninsula by the high mountains of the Western Ghâts, secure in its happy seclusion, where Nature has lavished her gifts with the prodigality of a Bacchante, prepares us for finding much of the primitive element in their religion. With the more uncultivated, the wilder races, this is almost entirely primitive in character; no more the cult of a Siva or Vishnu than of Sqaktktquaclt.

As has been remarked already ("Nambûtiris" Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), we see in Malabar the most undiluted form of the highest, the most abstract religion of Southern India, side by side with the most entirely primitive. The Nâyars have much of both.

The saying, "cleanliness is next to godliness," is one of those which contain much more real wisdom than is usually apprehended. The world is really divided, as I think Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, between the dirty and the clean; and, if I err not, the same author tells us that clothed man cannot be truly clean. Man has advanced far in development when he has become a clean animal. Now the Nâyars' religion is one of cleanliness, undiminished by superabundant clothing. Men and [291] women can scarcely wear less than they do in compatibility with the received ideas of decency and propriety, [515] nor can they be more scrupulous in the matter of personal [264] cleanliness. No Nâyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nâyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally [783] twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Polayan or any inferior being, even a Tîyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandalwood paste, is pollution, and he 683 must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house 564 and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about 783 99 years ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching

the Nâyar would be cut down instantly with a sword : 683 564
there would be no words. Now that the people of India 783
are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits [656]
sword play of this kind, and with a law-system under
which high and low are rated alike, the Nâyar has to [178]
content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for [201]
the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on unperturbed.
His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show
it in quite the same way.

Doubtless the natural habit of seclusion common to 771
Malabar, rendered easy by the wealth of vegetation of
which those who have never visited shores somewhat
alike climatically can have no conception, has favoured
the persistence of earlier forms of belief; but, whatever
may be the reason for it, there is much more of the
extremes of religious belief to be seen amongst the
Nâyars than amongst any other people or caste of
Southern India.

It has been noticed already how that the Malayalis [795]
have, practically, no sects such as obtain throughout the
rest of Southern India. Vishnu, Siva, Bhagavati, Rama—
all these names of the Hindu theogony are meaningless
to them. They do not know one from the other except in
name. Their Hinduism is not that of the rest of Southern
India.

It is time to come to concrete example, so I will 796
attempt a description of the ceremonial observed at the [773]
Pishâri kâvu—the Pishâri temple near Quilandy on the
coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed
in vague legend to have slain an Asura or
gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which event the
festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her followers.
It is fairly representative. The deity of the temple [776]
Bhagavati is spoken of as feminine in the spirit of accuracy,
but it is extremely unlikely whether ten per cent.
of the crowd even thought of sex in connection with
Bhagavati. Sacrifice of goats as part of the ceremonial [782]
was at first denied: it is a mystery too awful to be the
subject of conversation. At the same time, I am inclined
to think that much the weighter reason is that the priests
who cling to this part of the ceremonial are ashamed to
let it be known to the people that they do it. They like
it to be thought that such sacrifice is appropriate to the
inferior races, but that *they* are above it and have nothing
to do with it!

The festival lasts for seven days. When I visited it
in 1895 the last day was on the 31st of March. Before

796 Before
[793] day-break of the first day the ordinary temple priests, a
Mûssad, will leave the temple after having swept up
and made it clean; and (before day-break also) five
Nambûtiris will enter it, bearing with them "Sudhi
796 Kalasam." The Kalasam is on this occasion made of the
778 five products of the cow, *i.e.* (panchagavyam) together
[237] with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree (Arayâl)
and Darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being
brought to the temple, mantrams or magic verses will
[783] have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are
sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the
well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The
Nambûtiris will then perform the usual morning worship,
and either immediately after it or very soon afterwards
they leave the temple, and the Mûssad, the ordinary
[613] priest, returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs
to four Taravâds, and no sooner has it been purified than
the Kâranavans of these four Taravâds, virtually the
joint-owners of the temple (known as Urâlas) present to
the temple servant (known as a Pishârodi) the silver flag
of the temple which has been in the custody of one of
them since the last festival. The Pishârodi receives it
and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus
signifying that the festival has begun. While this is
being done, emphasis and grandeur is given to the occa-
[201] sion by the firing off of miniature mortars such as are
common at all South Indian festivals; and, after the
[411] flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple
small flags of coloured cloth. For the next few days
[788] there is nothing particular to be done beyond the pro-
cession morning, noon and night; the image of Bhaga-
vati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra of
drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those
who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple.
796 There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day
564 a man of the washerman (he is also a tailor: Vannân)
caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom
that there will be made a procession of Bhagavati issuing
[202] from the gates of the temple and passing round about.
Like all those who are in any way connected with the
[188] temple, this man's office is hereditary and he lives to a
small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a
[425] little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in
consideration for which he must fulfil certain require-
ments for the temple as on occasions of festivals. His
office also invests him with certain rights in the com-
munity. The Vannân has, I believe, immense power

Men and women who have taken part in the festival 796
are considered to have undergone spiritual purification 564
each in his or her own caste, and to have marked their [554]
position in it as well as in the social scale. [083]

Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human [541]
tumult busy in its religious effusion is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nâyar women looking on from the garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination for the present, while we must be content with such accuracy as we may attain on all points: neither fancy nor beauty shall allure us from the dull path of precision, for the mere features of the ceremonial are one real concern.

It will have been noticed that the Nambûtiris hold aloof from the festival: they purify the temple before and after, but no more.

The importance attached to the various offices of those 794
who are attached to the temple by however slender a
thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble 578
between two of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), an uncle and 564
nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. How the squabble arose, how indeed there could have arisen a squabble on such a point as seniority between an uncle and a nephew amongst Mukkuvans, whose descent is reckoned from father to son, I know not, but during the festival one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about 50 miles distant), paid some fees and established himself as the senior who
had the right to carry the umbrella. There are points 796
of resemblance between this festival and the village [171]
festival of Southern India where the buffalo "devoted" to the goddess of the village is sacrificed, where there is the slaughter of the lamb by the strong teeth of a man, the dressing up in leaves, the man naked and blindfolded going round outside the village while cooked rice and blood are scattered wide, the blindfolded man falling senseless before the goddess at the end of it.*

There are many festivals in Malabar description of 796
which would be very interesting, but information in 114
detail is wanting in my notes, so I must perforce rest content with what has been related of the festival at the

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* Described at length by me in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay" some eight years ago.

this ceremony. Thus having purged their bodies of all worldliness 796
they are taken into the ceremony and are seated as described 776
before. Now by means of the *mantrams* and poojah the serpent 782
gods are propitiated and in consequence they manifest themselves [787]
in the bodies of these female representatives of theirs. The
entrance of the gods into their bodies is characterised by a fearful 796
concussion of their whole frame, gradually developing into a 776
ceaseless, shaking, particularly the upper parts. A few minutes 782
afterwards, they begin to speak one by one and their speeches are 787
regarded as expressions of the god's will. Sometimes the gods
appear in the bodies of all these females and sometimes only in
those of a select few or none at all. The refusal of the gods to
enter into such persons is symbolical of some want of cleanliness
and purity in them; which contingency is looked upon as a
source of anxiety to the individual. It may also suggest the
displeasure of these gods towards the family in respect of which
the ceremony is performed. In either case, such refusal on the
part of the gods is an index of their ill-will or dissatisfaction.
In cases where the gods refuse to appear in any one of those seated
for the purpose, the ceremony is prolonged until the gods are so
properly propitiated as to constrain them to manifest themselves.
Then after the lapse of the number of days fixed for the ceremony
and after the will of the serpent gods is duly expressed the
ceremonies close.

"One other small item of offering to these gods consists in 776
certain ballads sung by the Pulluvar females going about from 533
house to house at stated seasons of the year. They take a pretty 534
large pitcher, close its opening by means of a small circular piece
of thin leather which is fastened on to the vessel by means of 782
strings strongly tied round its neck. Another string is adjusted
to the leather cover which when played on by means of the fingers,
produces a hoarse note which is said to please the god's ears,
pacify their anger and lull them into sleep. This vessel is carried
from house to house in the day time by these Pulluvar females;
and placing the vessel in a particular position on the ground,
and sitting in a particular fashion in relation to the vessel, they
play on the string which then produces a very pleasing musical
note. Then they sing ballads to the accompaniment of these
notes. After continuing this for sometime they stop, and getting
their customary dues from the family, go their own way. It is
believed that these notes and the ballads are peculiarly pleasing to
the serpent gods, who bless those for whose sakes the music has
been rendered. In consequence of the halo of sanctity that has 764
been popularly thrown round the serpent it is considered a sin of 776
a most heinous nature to kill one of these deified reptiles. The 825
killing of a cobra is regarded with the utmost concern amongst
us. In such case the carcase is taken and duly burned with all [783]

635 was in Calicut,* and it has always been necessary for
the new Zamorin to come to this fort in Calicut in a very
formal manner. The residences, the kôvilagams of the
various branches of the family, lie far to the eastward.
The heir to the Zamorinship must make his formal entry
into Calicut, for until he does so he is not, strictly
speaking, the Zamorin. There is much obscurity as to
details of the ceremonial, and I have not been able to
note these satisfactorily, so will state merely so much as
is undoubtedly correct. The new Zamorin comes to the
bank of the Kallai river adjoining Calicut. There he is
asked some questions, and he crosses this river in a
boat—not over the bridge. Arrived on the Calicut side
he must partake of some betel-leaf from a Mâppila man
dressed as a (Mâppila) woman, or, as some say, from a
Mâppila woman† and he says that he assumes the title of
Zamorin and rules until his uncle returns. The betel-leaf, received from a (Muhammadan) Mâppila, which he
[783] chews, defiles him. He has lost his status in the caste,
and he is supposed to be henceforth celibate. It would
seem that this old world ceremony is likely to follow the
track along which so much of what is interesting in
India is disappearing. The late Zamorin never went
through it, and he was therefore never, properly speaking,
[613] the Zamorin. He held the title perfunctorily, and he
was the kârnavan of the immense property of the family;
but he could not go "in procession" as Zamorin.‡
There are three unpleasant concomitants to the ceremony.
[834] It costs much money. It involves degradation in caste.
It compels chastity.

182 The other odd custom is not one affecting merely an
562 individual and a few with him, but it is a sexual one, and

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611 * There is now no sign of it, though the site is known.

† Those who say that a woman gives the betel-leaf say, very reasonably, that a Mâppila man would never for any consideration or purpose wear a woman's garb. But, on the other hand, it is said the person *is* and must be a man, and that he dresses for this occasion only, as a woman.

‡ The Zamorin was in Calicut but once since he became Zamorin on the occasion of his visit to His Excellency the Governor of Madras in 1896, and then infringed custom by coming to Calicut without previously undergoing the ceremony. Owing to a death in the family he was under pollution and therefore unable to undertake the ceremony at that time, so he came by train. These old-fashioned customs, written or unwritten, take no count of trains. For example, the modern pilgrims from Northern India find the train very convenient when they wish to visit Rameshvaram. The penance of a life is reduced to a few days in a train. What would the old sages say! So the Zamorin came by train. But he could not go "in procession" along the road *as Zamorin*, and was obliged to make his visit as an ordinary grandee.

Nayar

royal lineage. The retainer sub-castes disputed for rank and, in their separate villages, held 175
the same rights of administration over the lower castes. In all these sub-castes, including 564
the royal lineage, men were trained from the age of seven as soldiers in village gymnasia
headed by military leaders (Asāns), and formed a permanent, mobile militia of the king- 613
dom. Below the retainer sub-castes in rank came the small, non-military Nayar servant sub- 631
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers.[1] Quite apart from these
Brahman and Nayar sub-castes, in a separate area of the village lived the lower patrilineal [201]
castes of tenants and menials and the lowest, 'exterior' castes of serfs. [566]

The Nayar Kinship System. The Nayar lineage (*taravād*) is exogamous and matrilineal kin-
ship terms are extended throughout its range. Its members are united by the observance of 613
fifteen days' ritual pollution at a birth or death, and traditionally by worship of the spirits
of dead heads of the lineage, and of a group of totemic snakes. The lineage is divided into [601]
small segments, which I call property-groups, each three to five generations deep. Each group [783]
is headed by its eldest man (*kāranavan*) who is the legal guardian of its members and controls [771]
their property.

The property-group was also until recently the dwelling-group. Residence was, and is [769]
still in some houses, uxorilocal: a husband visits his wife after supper and leaves before break- [592]
fast. Traditionally, a woman might have any number of lovers of appropriate sub-caste,
and a man any number of mistresses. This custom of combined polyandrous and polygynous [591]
unions, besides being consistent with a strong matrilineal lineage system, was almost certainly [595]
associated with the occupation of Nayar men as soldiers, since it began to die out shortly after
the armies were disbanded, about 1810, and a hundred years before the lineage showed signs [178]
of disintegration.

The rules of mating were as follows. Sex relations were prohibited within the lineage, 613
and with more than one man or one woman of the same lineage. The Nayar servant sub-
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers were endogamous, as were 582
all the lower patrilineal castes and the serf-castes. Within the range of military and ruling
sub-castes (except for the royal lineages which admitted no peers), all unions were permissible 564
outside the lineage and the range of prohibited affines, and within the sub-caste. Furthermore, these sub-castes were knit together by 'hypergamous' unions between women of lower and men of higher sub-caste. Members of the three retainer sub-castes, which disputed for rank, had only temporary and sporadic sex-relations across sub-caste boundaries. These took place during war when soldiers were permitted to contravene the normal rules against dining with or touching members of other retainer sub-castes and might enter each others' houses in order to eat and sleep. More permanent relationships were encouraged between women of the retainer sub-castes and Kiriyattil, Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between Kiriyattil women and Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between Sāmantan women and royal or Nambūdiri men; and between royal women and Nambūdiri men. The royal lineages, acknowledging no others as peers, were obliged to marry all their women upwards and all their men downwards. The Walluvanād and Cochin princesses married Nambūdiri men, the princes Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, or retainer-women. The Zamorins at first married only some of their women to Nambūdiris, and the rest to men of the more ancient royal lineages of Beypore, Bettem, and Kodungalur, all of whom had been conquered by the Zamorins and made honoured vassals in their kingdom. At some time in the 18th century, the Zamorin's lineage gave up this practice and began to marry its women only to Nambūdiris, while continuing to marry its men to Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, and retainer-Nayar women.

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[1] Respectively called Vettukads, Attikurssis (Chidigans in Cochin), Veluthedans, and Vilakkatalavans. The small temple-servant castes who rank between Nambūdiris and Nayars and were also concerned in hypergamous marriages are for lack of space excluded from this discussion.

Nayar

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[564] marriage rite. At the auspicious time, each girl was led in turn by her brother from the house
and seated on the plank. At a sign from the astrologer, the Brahman priest (called Elayad,
[793] a low sub-caste of Nambūdiris who officiate at Nayar funerals) handed the *tāli* to the bride-
groom, who tied it round the girl's neck. The nineteen couples were then secluded in the house
588 for the remaining three days and nights of the rites. Informants said that in modern times
when lineages were often large, the couples numerous and the girls sometimes infants, cohabita-
833 tion would be unlikely. It was not, however, forbidden, and appears formerly to have been
178 required. It is clear that the rite was ritually if not actually a defloration ceremony, as is
indicated by the saying *Tāli kettiu amma āyi* ('having had the *tāli* tied, a girl becomes a
[married] woman').

588 Next morning the party reassembled without the couples, and offerings to Bhagavadi
took place. The participants were a Sūdra Nayar oracle (*velichchappād*), a Vattekad (oil-monger)
782 Nayar sacrificial priest, and a Nayar boy who accompanied the oracle, carrying a staff to
the top of which was tied a brush of coconut flowers. These officiants perform similarly by
787 hereditary right at the annual Bhagavadi temple festival. The priest offered rice, paddy,
793 coconuts, incense, a burning lamp, and toddy before the branch of the milk-tree, following
which he sacrificed a cock and poured out a vessel of red blood-like liquid. The oracle then
donned a waist-band and anklets of bells and took a sickle in his hand. (These symbolize the
power of Bhagavadi: when he dons them it is believed that she enters and possesses the oracle.)
Accompanied by loud music, he leapt wildly in the air, shouting hoarsely and chopping
his forehead with the sickle till blood flowed down. In this frenzy he called out to the host
kāranavan that the goddess was appeased by his offerings. His possession then subsided and his
insignia were removed.

776 Bhagavadi is the Malabar goddess of war, smallpox, and the soil. Her idol, in the Nayar
village temple, is a hollow cylindrical stone, a symbol of the vagina, as the Brahmanical idol
[831] of Siva is the lingam, a symbol of the phallus. Bhagavadi is also worshipped as the oracle's
sickle, as a picture drawn in chalks on the floor, as the milk-tree (*Alstonia scholaris*), and as the
[753] ancestral sword of a Nayar lineage. She is believed to have protected the Nayars in war. She
is fierce and vengeful, her chief power being to inflict smallpox. She is propitiated by similar
[782] rites during smallpox epidemics, on the sixteenth day after a smallpox death, and on the last
night of her annual temple festival, during which she is angry with the villagers who must
[834] observe sexual continence.

The remainder of the second day, and the third day, were devoted to feasting and music.
588 On the fourth morning each couple went to the village bathing pool where, hand-in-hand,
they took a purifying plunge-bath. Then, decked in fine clothes, they returned to the lineage
[783] house. In the kitchen each couple ate a meal from the same loaf. The company was then
fed, but on this day, alone of all days, women ate before men. The bridegrooms received
[264] clothing and foodstuffs from the *kāranavan* and departed for their respective homes.

In Pālakkara the *tāli*-tier might remain with his bride as her first *sambandham* lover. At
588 the last *tāli*-rite two of the nineteen bridegrooms remained in association with their brides,
though one abandoned his shortly afterwards. The other seventeen girls formed unions with
184 other men of the village shortly after puberty. In all *tāli*-rites in this area, however, the 'bride-
groom' remained the ritual husband of his 'bride' throughout his life, though he need never
595 visit her again. At his death, the 'wife', together with her children by whatever physiological
[765] father, must observe fifteen days' pollution. Death pollution was otherwise traditionally
observed only for matrilineal kin: not until recently was it observed for the *sambandham* lover
[783] and the physiological father. The *tāli*-tier of a woman was regarded, moreover, as the ritual
father of her children. If they knew him, the children called this man *appan* (the Tamil word
[851] for 'father', used for the *genitor* by Tiyyars and Christians) as distinct from *acchan* (originally

In addition to maintaining his wife he is expected but not strictly obliged to maintain his children 594
till puberty, though both wife and children may claim maintenance from their lineage as 273
well. Paternal kin are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five generations. 851
Marriage is prohibited between the children of brothers. The *enangar* relationship formerly
existed between lineages of the same local group: individual *enangar* represented the 601
group to the lineage at funerals and kept watch over its observance of caste laws. In most 582
rites, however, patrilateral kin and affines filled the the roles filled by *enangar* in South Malabar. 613

The post-puberty *sambandham* is initiated with ceremonies and feasting, the central rite
being the handing of a loin-cloth by the man to the woman in the presence of his age-mates 585
and her kin. After consummation in the bride's house, the couple go to the husband's house 851
where they are ceremonially received by elders. Children must be born in the mother's ancestral
house, but paternal kin assert their claims in rites shortly after the birth. Physiological
paternity is, of course, seldom in doubt, and sibling-groups refer to themselves proudly as
'the children of such-and-such' [their father's] lineage', for whose members they commonly
exhibit greater affection, though less loyalty, than they do for matrilineal kinsmen.

The Nayar Tāli-*Rite*. Though the North Malabar *sambandham* was a 'real' marriage, the 588
pre-puberty *tāli* rite was conducted as in the south. Unfortunately, I lack details of this rite
either from the literature or from informants. Among Nambiars of Kottayam the ceremonies
lasted four days and were conducted in a marriage shed, the areca-palm corner-post and the
branch of the milk-tree being planted ceremonially as in the south. A temple-servant woman
drew a chalk pattern to represent Bhagavadi and made offerings of rice, paddy, and coconuts
before it. Before the *tāli* was tied on the first day, men of the temple drummers' caste of Marars,[1] [564]
who here rank below Nayars and at their funerals direct offerings to the spirit, placed gold
bangles on the upper arms of the 'brides' and addressed them for the first time as *amma* [301]
('mother', or 'married lady'). After the rite, the Marars received the bangles as payment. At a
sign from the astrologer, a Nambūdiri Brahman tied the *tāli* for each girl. The couples were
secluded for three days and the 'marriage' ended with a ceremonial bath on the fourth day.
Unless (as was rare in this area) the Nambūdiri wished to visit the girl as her regular husband
after puberty, he might not cohabit with her again. The *tāli*-tier was not called *appan* by the [851]
children, nor was he regarded as their ritual father. Children even traditionally observed
death pollution not for this ritual bridegroom of the mother but for the *genitor*, at whose [765]
funeral rites they played a part only second in importance to the deceased's younger brothers
and sisters' children. Informants did not think that the 'bride' observed pollution for her [783]
tāli-tier's death; she did, however, traditionally observe pollution for her *sambandham* husband
unless divorced before his death.

In Samantan Nambiar *nāduvari* lineages, as among Nambiars, the *tāli* was tied by a 588
Nambūdiri. *Sambandham* unions sometimes took place between *nāduvari* lineages of equal 613
rank; more commonly, as in the south, *nāduvari* men married Nambiar women and Samantan
Nambiar women married royal or Nambūdiri men. In the ancient Kshattriya lineages of
Kottayam and Kurumbranad the *tāli* was tied by a Nambūdiri, and women of these lineages
later had Nambūdiris as husbands, the princes marrying 'down' with women of chiefly or
village headmen's lineages. The Kolattiri lineage, which is less ancient and not acknowledged
to be 'truly' Kshattriya, is said to have been a branch of the Travancore royal lineage which [564]
moved its site long ago. Kolattiri women had the *tāli* tied by men of a caste called Koil Tamburans,
ancient Kshattriya families of Travancore who had been conquered by the Travancore
Maharajas, and some of whom were brought to North Malabar by the Kolattiri

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[1] In South Malabar Marars are a temple-servant caste of drummers ranking slightly above Nayars. Nayar funeral rites are conducted by the lower Nayar sub-caste of Attikurissis (Chidigans in Cochin). In North Malabar, Marars rank below Nayars, and conduct Nayar funeral rites, there being no separate subcaste of funeral priests in the north.

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sexual jealousy of the natal kinsmen (projected on to spirits, gods, and ancestors) aroused by a woman's marital sexuality. The prohibitions on eating meat and condiments are those stipulated for both men and women in all periods of pollution and also in periods of abstention to obtain ritual purity before worshipping a god. Since these foods are believed to induce sexual desire, this prohibition is equated by informants with abstention from sexual intercourse (also enjoined in all periods of pollution or of enhanced ritual purity) and thus is comparable here to the prohibition on seeing a man or other male sexual symbol and of refraining from marital intercourse.

The practice of a girl's arming herself with a knife or an arrow during menstruation may signify an unconscious desire on the part of women to appropriate and arm themselves with the penis of the prohibited parent, or with any phallic symbol, and thus obviate the dreaded incestuous attack. Since the dread is also unconsciously a desire, this hypothesis is not incompatible with the other, that the knife and arrow are phallic symbols (perhaps paternal) with which the girl, by keeping them beside her, symbolically cohabits in the seclusion period.

On the side of men, the planting of an arrow by the girl's brother near the bathing pool after her first menstruation may be a sign of the brother's unconscious desire to copulate with his sister, or to drive away unwanted parental figures (the mother's brother or the father) whose sexual attack the girl both dreads and unconsciously desires. The same incestuous desire on the part of the brother appears in a South Malabar Nayar rite at the first menstruation, where the brother breaks a sheath containing coconut buds with his knife and counts the buds which roll out as an augur of the number of children his sister will bear.

It seems probable that in general the menstruous woman is unconsciously equated by a man with his mother as a forbidden sexual object; hence the fear of approaching her, based on unconscious fear of castration by the father. This view finds support in the beliefs that a man becomes impotent if he copulates with a menstruous woman, and that, by extension, trees and plants wither and die if she urinates or walks upon them. As is well known, the fear of impotence frequently indicates an unconscious fear of being castrated by the father for a sexual approach to the mother. The particular fear of the menstruous woman may lead back to an infantile belief, common in our own society, that parental intercourse is a sadistic attack by the father in which the mother is wounded and bleeds. The fact that the menstruous woman is armed with a knife or an arrow recalls an allied phantasy common among European infants, of the phallic mother who by intercourse has possessed herself of the father's penis and is thus doubly terrifying since, if one approached her, the penis would attack (castrate) oneself. (Klein 1932, pp. 103, 189-90.)

Why is it deemed necessary for a girl to 'menstruate' and be deflowered (both symbolically) before she has attained puberty and is likely to enter into real sex relations? The first part of my hypothesis is that this rite issues out of the marked horror of incest in these castes, which makes it necessary for the natal kinsmen of a woman to renounce the rights in her mature sexuality before she is in fact mature.

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Among the Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars descent is matrilineal and the *ius in genitricem* of a woman remains with her matrilineage headed by her *kāranavan*. This man is usually her mother's brother and later her own elder brother. In all these castes but particularly among South Malabar Nayars, a woman must implicitly obey these kinsmen, sometimes to the extent of divorcing her husband of whom they are overtly jealous. The horror with which these castes regard incest within the lineage, however, makes the etiquette of behaviour between a woman and older men of her lineage formalized to the point of avoidance. She may not sit before them, speak to them except under necessity, nor be alone with one of them. In the royal lineages a prince should not see his mature younger sisters and maternal nieces except on ceremonial occasions.

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with the mother's brother; emotionally, hostility is more repressed and greater loyalty demanded. Both avuncular and fraternal relationships pivot on the bond of men to their mothers and sisters: common devotion to these women places the men in a position of equivalence rather than of unity, emphasizes loyalty to the *taravād* rather than interpersonal amity, and points up the rivalry between them.

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The suppressed hostility of a boy towards his father with reference to the mother becomes, therefore, among South Malabar Nayars transferred to the mother's brother at the age of four to six. The completeness of this tranference appears in death rites. The younger brother or sister's son of a dead man performs his funeral rites, observes pollution for fifteen days, and, if he is the immediate heir, mourning and sexual abstinence for six months to one year. He thenceforth annually offers cooked food to the spirit, which is represented in the form of a terrible and vengeful animal (*predham*, the same word as for the hairy spirits who attack menstruous women). No mourning, pollution, or propitiations were traditionally observed for the *genitor*, about whose spirit no beliefs are held. [783] The observance of pollution (without rites) [illegible] the mother's *tāli*-tier was the sole acknowledgment of its fathers' roles in the *taravād*'s perpetuation. The son's unconscious desires remain primarily fixed upon his mother, as appears in his paramount devotion to her in social life and to Bhagavadi in religion. They appear to be secondarily directed to the younger sister and sister's daughter, hence the avoidance and extreme formality demanded in the relationship with them. The rites of first menstruation and pregnancy and the institution of the serpent-gods seem to indicate that unconsciously the mother's brothers and other matrilineal forbears are regarded as *genitores* as well as *patres* and the elder brother as the symbolic spouse of a woman as well as her natural guardian.

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Among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the transference of hostile wishes on the part of the male, and incestuous wishes on the part of the female, from the father to the mother's brother, is less completely carried out. The father is often known throughout his life, when he shares with the mother's brother the role of *pater*. Since legal rights are concentrated with him, the relationship to the mother's brother tends to be more hostile, that to the father, more affectionate. But individual circumstances modify these relationships: a man may align himself alternately with mother's brother and with father according to the financial support each offers him. Death-pollution is observed for both and the vengeful spirits of both are propitiated. As in South Malabar, the primary emotional relationship is always with the mother and the secondary one with the sister, to whose claims those of the wife are subordinated. The etiquette of avoidance and restraint towards the sister and sisters' daughters is identical in north and south. A girl regards her father with greater reverence as her natural guardian, but her behaviour is more stereotyped than among South Malabar Nayars and corresponds more closely with that to the mother's brother. [835] Father-daughter incest is regarded with greater horror than in the south, from which we may surmise that unconscious incestuous desires remain stronger.

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On the surface, the South Malabar Tiyyar system with its double unilineal descent and emphasis on the unity of the patrilineal extended family forms a contrast to these matrilineal systems. The father or rather, traditionally, the eldest of the fraternal group of fathers, is head of the family. Sons are brought up under the discipline of all their fathers whom they are expected to regard with equal deference and love. A more regular Oedipus complex appears to develop in this caste. From the age of five to six, a boy must observe reverence to his fathers comparable to that of a Nayar boy to his mother's brothers. He addresses them with deference, and avoids them out of respect. Like a Nayar boy, he is dismissed from intimate contact with the mother about this age, as also with the sisters: they in turn, as he grows older, treat him with deference. The unconscious hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about

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pays the head washerman the cloth which the girl has worn to cover her head and face. 000

It seems that in this offering to the household lamp (as in the Tiyyar girl's offering to the 881
lamp and the marriage-pole in North Malabar, when she is instructed by the barber) the 588
washerman stands as a kind of bridegroom to the girl, as he does also by singing songs to 564
increase her fertility (see Freud 1919, ch. 3; Radcliffe-Brown 1939).[1] In some areas 533
of North Malabar the barber, too, sings songs at the *tāli*-rite to increase the fertility of the girl, 182
but I do not know whether these are obscene. In any case, both barber and washermen stand
in a special relation of intimacy to the girl during and immediately after her first menstrual
pollution, and the barber has the same role during the mock menstrual seclusion before the
tāli-rite and at the rites representing ceremonial defloration which follow this seclusion.

Why, if it is in some circumstances a ritually polluting act, worthy of a low caste man, 588
symbolically to deflower a woman, do the Nayars and Kshattriyas call holy men of higher 783
caste, and the North Malabar Tiyyar barbers, a respected elder of their community, to tie a 182
woman's *tāli*? This becomes intelligible when we remember that ritual purity and pollution
are the positive and negative aspects of a condition best described as *sacer*, supernaturally
dangerous or valuable, the reverse of the profane.[2] In South India, a host of situations
illustrate this dual nature of the 'sacred' as potentially polluting or potentially unusually
pure. Thus faeces and urine are normally ritually polluting, yet the dung and urine of the
sacred cow (a mother symbol) are eaten or sprinkled to purify oneself of the pollutions of
death, of birth or of sin. The virgin, then, in these castes is sacred: it is ritually dangerous to
take her virginity. My hypothesis is that this is so because the virgin is unconsciously associ- 831
ated with the mother, as a woman whom it is desirable to approach sexually but who may 588
not be approached, because of the threat of castration or murder by a male parental figure
(originally the father and, in the matrilineal castes, the mother's brother). I think that this 783
is so because the virgin is still in the possession of her own jealous natal kinsmen, who own,
though they may not use, her sexuality. She is, therefore, feared by men of her own age-group, 182
who feel that it is the place of some father-figure (unconsciously, their own father or mother's
brother) to take her virginity. A father-figure common to the whole society is therefore
summoned, symbolically (and sometimes actually) to deflower the girl, release her, in respect
of her sexuality, from the ownership of her natal kinsmen, and leave her, divorced on the
fourth day, as a normal mature woman who 'may now do what she pleases'.

In the higher matrilineal castes the bridegroom has all the attributes of a father to the 588
Nayar community. When the *desavar* ties the *tāli*, he is a father-figure to the village as a 182
whole: in some villages he even has the title of *acchan* ('father'). The *nāduvari* is a father- 182
surrogate to the *desavaris*, and the king, to the *nāduvaris*. The Nambudiris are 'fathers' to the 564
whole Nayar and Kshattriya community, being the greatest landowners, the highest in ritual

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[1] This impression of the washerman as symbolic bridegroom was strengthened by an incident in Palakkara. Five years previously, a Nayar girl of eleven in a family of newcomers had menstruated before her *tāli* was tied. Fearing neighbourly disapproval, her mother called the low caste washerman (Mannan)to the house and paid him to tie the girl's *tāli*, on the third day while she was still in menstrual pollution. He then brought the loin-cloth for the ceremonial bathing as usual on the fourth day, and performed the normal ceremonies, which were attended without unfavourable comment by other Nayars of the village. The girl's elder sister explained that, having failed to obtain a Nayar 'bridegroom' before the menstruation, or to tie the *tāli* herself before a temple god, the mother acted correctly in calling the washerman during pollution, thus saving her daughter from the danger of ostracism by the caste.

[2] The employment of a kinswoman of the bridegroom to perform all or part of the marriage rites on his behalf is common in the 'real' marriage ceremonies of many Hindu castes. A Tamil Brahman bridegroom only half ties his wife's *tāli*; his sister stands behind the girl to tie the second half of the knot. Among Travancore Tiyyars, the bridegroom's sisters and mother go to the bride's house without him for the real post-puberty marriage, where the sister recites the formulae on his behalf and later brings home the bride. Sociologically, the part played by a man's kinswoman in his marriage reflects, no doubt, their own interest in the marriage and rights in the bride. But in all the instances we may, from a psychological point of view, interpret the bridegroom's withdrawal in favour of a kinswoman as evidence of his fear to marry, a fear originally engendered by his Oedipal wishes and dread of paternal vengeance. Alternatively, the bridegroom's unconscious fear of his older kinsmen's vengeance may be got over in the reverse manner by requiring these elders to absent themselves from the marriage-rite, as in the *sambandham* ceremonies of North Malabar Nayars.

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588 rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives
182 of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars,
564 so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory
fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers
call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambûdiri landlords, the *nāduvari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

588 Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surro-
gate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'.
184 The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste,
who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the
182 stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform
787 it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since,
though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gym-
nasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

588 Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might
tie the *tāli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before
604 the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste
it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because
184 Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into
her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom
182 could not tie the *tāli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's
brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from
her *kāranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears.
If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kāranavan*, an equally
dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife
or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

564 The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tāli*, and the role of the barber as one
intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood
[588] by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for
Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are mid-
[305] wives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since
both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and
[759] death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their
children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes
[582] physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger
brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they
sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older'
[693] side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by
name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in
[584] some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions
and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-
[793] broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death
he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he
[782] makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil
[783]

Nayar
Tiyyar

and the five products of the cow. This ends their pollution and also the prohibition on using 564
oil for cooking and bathing during the pollution period. The ability of a low caste man to 783
purify a family from pollution (when in other contexts he is less pure than they) is an anomalous situation common in South India which has not so far been explained in sociological terms. It is paralleled by the fact that the washerman's purifying cloth is used by a woman to
bathe in after menstruation; the washerman must also supply a similar purifying cloth for [841]
Nayars and Tiyyars to stand on when they are being purified by cow's excrements from the
pollution of death. In some contexts, the Nayars recognize this anomaly, and thus employ [793]
two priests for death-rites, the lower caste funeral priest for ties during pollution, and the Elayad, a low sub-caste of Nambūdiris ranking above Nayars, to purify them and instruct
them in final rites to the spirit. The Elayad also consecrates the South Malabar Nayar *tāli*, 564
so that the Tiyyar barber may be compared to him as a functionary in the *tāli*-rite. In addition,
the barber acts as a priest in Tiyyar family shrines in North Malabar dedicated to Bhagavadi [588]
and to ancestors. Finally, as barber, he performs the ceremonial hair-cutting of a Tiyyar
boy at the age of three, and the ceremonial shaving of a Tiyyar man at a funeral and before [793]
other ritual occasions, including the *tāli*-rite of his nieces and daughters. [852]

I suggest that the barber, both as a polluting 'younger' person and as a holy one who [764]
can conduct Tiyyar ceremonies and purify them from pollution, is both a son-surrogate and a
father-surrogate for Tiyyars. His association in death-ceremonies with the spirits of Tiyyar 564
leads me to suspect that he is identified with the ancestors, who, in psycho-analytic terms,
collectively represent the father.[1] In this role the barber would resemble the washerman, 182
his 'twin' in the caste-hierarchy, who in masked dances impersonates the dead ancestors and local heroes of both Nayars and Tiyyars in North Malabar and of Tiyyars in the south, and, while possessed by them, declares their will to the *taravād*. We have seen that the washerman, like the barber, may be viewed as a proxy bridegroom to the Tiyyar or Nayar girl in the puberty rites where he instructs her to perform offerings to the lamp as a phallic symbol and sings lewd songs to enhance her fertility.

The barber is also, however (because of hypergamous Tiyyar-barber marriages), a son- 564
figure, and in general caste-terms a junior to the Tiyyar. In this role his ability to act as a kind
of bridegroom at the *tāli*-rite reminds us of the practice of South Malabar Tiyyars, who 588
select a small boy of an affine *taravād* as proxy bridegroom in the rite. Until about the age 182
of eight, a boy may touch mature women of his own or another lineage. The fact that the small bridegroom is carried into the marriage-shed in the arms of his maternal uncle renders harmless his 'marriage' to the bride: he is a child, brought by a father-figure who adjures him to perform the rite. This fits my hypothesis that the immature girl in these castes is unconsciously likened to the mother: only a father-figure, an infant, or some generalized 'polluted' yet 'holy' figure may approach her with impunity.

My hypothesis that the virgin is unconsciously associated with the mother as a forbidden 588
sexual object rests partly on the fact that in these rites the girl is brought into association with 831
Bhagavadi, the mother-goddess of Nayars and Tiyyars. A branch of her milk-tree is set 182

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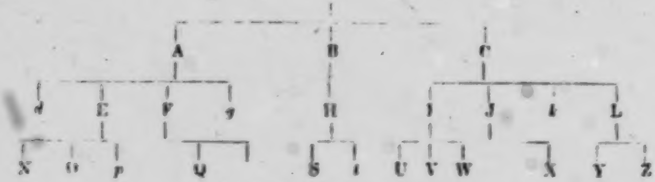
[1] A psychoanalyst might probably see in the barber's other roles that of father-surrogate. Hair-cutting and shaving are
in many parts of the world likened to castration or to a weakening of sexual power. Among Tiyyars they are ceremonially 776
performed for boys at the age of three to five, and for men immediately after a death in the family. The ceremonial head-
shaving of a boy (like the ceremonial ear-boring by the goldsmith, another low-caste functionary) is believed to reduce
his *sakthi* (strength) and render him immune to the evil eye of the envious or to attacks from ghosts. It is possible to argue [326]
that the rite is a symbolic castration, performed to protect the child, in phantasy, from the danger of real castration at the
hands of his jealous father, whose form is projected in the evil eye and in ghosts who attack small children. After a death,
the ritual shaving of the heir is part of a complex of rites to ward off the vengeful anger of the spirit. It goes along with abstention from intercourse and from sexually stimulating foods, and the carrying of a knife (phallic talisman?) by the heir to [564]
ward off the murderous attack of the spirit. I associate head-shaving, like sexual abstinence, with symbolic castration of the mourner to avert the castrating and murderous wrath of the deceased whom, in his unconscious mind, the mourner himself has murdered.

When the
family becomes unwieldy, or certain members show insubordination, the family property is partitioned equally among *each female line*. That is to say, if there are three sisters in the family, each having daughters and granddaughters, the partition is done in such a way that each of the ancestresses founds a separate family among whom the original property is equally divided. It is best explained by a diagram:— 613 425



[Capital letters stand for women.]

In this case, supposing A, B and C dead, and the eldest male member *d*, being *Karnavan*, the male members, *t*, *k* and others demand partition. The joint property will be divided equally into three parts, each of the groups, in spite of their numerical difference, getting equal shares. Now, in the first group, there are two subdivisions to be made, while, in the third group, the property has to be further divided into three. Group 2 has only one female line, and, therefore, in that line, the property remains intact.

The partition of property does not affect the relationship. The members of a divided family are still called by the classificatory names, and a birth or death in one family creates pollution to the whole stock. Centuries might pass, but they would still remain strictly exogamous groups, and the rights of relationship (such as pollution, etc.) would continue, though in a lesser degree. There are many instances in which, though family partition took place at least a hundred and fifty years ago, the members continue to call each other brothers and sisters, as if they were the nearest blood relations. 613 601 783 178

It may be noticed in this connection that a Nāyar young man or woman is not supposed to talk to any relations of the opposite sex in the same family *if they are of almost the same age*. A younger brother can talk to a sister considerably older than himself; but under no conditions may he talk to a younger one, and in orthodox families this restriction is carried so far that if it is known that a brother is standing somewhere near, the sister scrupulously avoids him. It is the custom that after the *Talikettu kalyanam* the brother (own and collateral alike) is not supposed to see, talk to, or be in the same room with his sister. This involves considerable inconvenience, for, if the mother is dead and there is no one of *her generation* living, a man loses all touch with the family, because his sisters and women of that generation may not speak to him, and he may not go near them. In such cases, it is customary 613 834 593

pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in 843
the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as 613
to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enangar* [604]
group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes [593]
her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, [787]
and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be. [842]

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official 843
notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that 613
a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Ammāvi* or the 182
mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. [604]
It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the 843
actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child 182
a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest 789
dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi?*" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to 843
respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong 846
untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry 783
any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations.
No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the 853
birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders
who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus 846
drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her 608
children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nāyar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
301 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a
789 silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel
leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly
meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament.
The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition
of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of
preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil
spirits.[1]

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the
initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the
whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult
initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
[824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars),
betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the
expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving
262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried
plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
[123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
[613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as
a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to
the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together
with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
[782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
[783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

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[241] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea
that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book
[114] on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the
development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom
among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the
general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

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themselves by bathing in the temple tank, come to the *Darsana* (the aspect towards 262 which the face of the image looks). There the priest brings the offering and the [783] male member from either the father's family or the mother's own family takes a [782] little of it on his pointing finger and gives it to the child. The child is supposed to inherit the qualities of the person who gives it the sacred rice, an idea allied to the superstition concerning godfather and godchild. There is, of course, a feast on the day at the child's house.

"Chaque société générale," says M. Van Gennep, "peut être considéré comme une 852 sorte de maison devisée en chambres et en couloirs. . . . Chez les demi-civilisés ces 561 compartiments sonts soigneusement isolés les unes des autres et pour passer de l'un à l'autre des formalités et des cérémonies sont nécessaires." This idea that in semi-civilised societies stages of life are marked out with great precision so that the passage from one to another necessitates ceremonies or "rites de passage" is applicable only in a very limited sense in the case of the Nāyars. Among them such ceremonies are few and very far between. The male children, after the *Churu Koda,* 561 or the rice-giving ceremony just now described, have only one other ceremony to perform which is called *Sasty-Purty,* or the fullness of sixty years. Between his sixth month and his sixtieth year a male member of the Nāyar Society has no *rites de passage* to pass through. The *Sasty-Purty,* which takes place on his sixtieth birthday, [886] is a sort of jubilee, after which respectable people are supposed to retire from worldly life. It is indeed a *rite de passage.*

Women have naturally more ceremonies than men. Apart from the *Talikettu* [881] (described in the last chapter) a Nāyar woman has to pass through the ceremonies of [843] *Terundu Kuli* (bathing after the first menses) and *Pulicudi* described above. After she has become a mother a woman can be said to be free from all ceremonies till [886] her sixtieth year, when, after a *Sasty-Purty,* she also retires from active life.

The Nāyar funeral ceremonies are of a very complex nature. They show a 764 great deal of Hindu ideas about soul and re-birth mixed with purely Nāyar beliefs [177] about *Pretrams,* ghosts, etc., etc. It is important, in this connection, to notice at the very start that the Nāyars make a clear distinction between the ceremonies performed at the death of the eldest member of the family and those at the death of others. The following is the procedure generally adopted at the death of a Nāyar. As soon as a person dies he is bathed and clad in white, and laid on a bed made of long plantain leaves. If it is the eldest male or female member of the family that 764 is dead, then all their relations on the matrilineal side present new cotton cloths, with 766 which the corpse is covered and tied before it is taken to be burnt. Only the eldest members are burnt; others are buried. Apart from the greater importance attached to the death of the eldest members, the ordinary funeral rites are in essentials the same.

The presence of the *Māran* (a particular caste among the Nāyars who perform 764 the lesser priestly functions) is absolutely necessary on the occasion. He is sent for as 564

764 [564] soon as death has taken place in a house, and on his arrival undertakes the general management of the ceremonies.

After the corpse is tied and laid on the plantain leaves, a ceremony called *Para Nirathuka* takes place. (*Para* is a measure of paddy, and *Nirathuka* means to place in line.) A coconut-oil lamp is lit and placed at the head of the corpse and immediately in front of it are placed three *paras* of rice. The significance of this ceremony is unknown to me.

766 *Ceremonies of Cremation.*—If the deceased is the eldest of a family the body is now cremated. A pyre is made of mango wood, and the corpse is placed with its head towards the south (the god of death, according to the Hindu mythology, resides in the south), and then covered with fuel. The nephew or younger brother lights the fire. Then all the members of the family and all others who have been polluted by contact with them go and bathe in the tank. During the process of burning there is a process called *Kumba pradikshanam*—which is manifestly an Aryan custom (*Kumbham* and *Pradikshanam* are two Sanskrit words: the first means a pot, and the second means to walk round). The ceremony, as its name implies, consists of walking round the pyre with a pitcher, the bottom of which is pierced. One of the family fills this pitcher with water and carries it three times round the burning corpse, dashing it on the ground at the end.

765 Two or three members of the family continue to perform funeral rites for the next fourteen days. As I have not taken part in it I do not possess first-hand knowledge.

765 For all the fourteen days, all the members of the family are under pollution.
783 The pollution, in the case of death, is very strong. All the members of the family are
[564] untouchable, and any Nāyar who touches them must purify himself by a bath. On
the fourteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. The *Mārān* comes in the morning
and gives everyone some oil. After smearing the body with these everyone goes
and bathes, and comes back clad in white. The *Mārān* then sprinkles holy water,
and a Brahmin priest purifies the house. There is generally a big feast for two days.

765 The feast on the fifteenth day is accompanied by some sports. All the men
526 of the neighbouring villages come for it, and there is great *tamasha*. How far this
could be identified with funeral sports elsewhere it is hard to say.

785 After these feastings one of the family undertakes a *Diksha* (which means a
782 vow) for forty-one[1] days or a whole year. During this time, the man who undertakes
the *Diksha* lives apart with a Brahmin. He is not allowed to talk to or see a woman.
765 He must not cut his hair or his nails. He must bathe twice a day in the river, or in
the tank, and lead a pure and pious life. If it is only for forty-one days, there is not
[527] much feasting at the end of it. If it goes on for a full year, there is a huge celebration,

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[1] All ordinary vows are taken for forty-one days. If you want to placate a deity you pray to him for forty-one days. If you want to make a big sacrifice it extends to forty-one days, etc.

and wives with others as a universal national custom; (*c*) the absence of "*Sati.*"[1] 101 174

In view of the fact that the Veddas are a strictly monogamous people, the prevalence of this custom in Ceylon can only be attributed to South Indian influence. [595] [171] Existing as it does in almost physical contiguity, it is indubitable that these customs and the Nāyar customs had the same origin. In fact, a Naga community was spread over the whole of South India, and the pressure of Aryan emigration seems gradually to have driven them behind the western Ghats in the case of the Nāyars and beyond the straits in the case of their kindred in Ceylon.

The Laws of Philology also support this view. I am assured by Don de Z. 101 Wickerma Singhe that the change from "G" to "Y" (as from Nagar to Nayar) 174 is very commonly met with in Dravidian and Prakistic languages. Apart from the general consonance of this change to the philological rules, Mr. Wickerma Singhe also pointed out to me that in Sinhalese[2] the Sanskrit word *Nāga* is written and pronounced as *Naya.*

The word *Nāyar*, therefore, is, without a shadow of doubt, the same as the word *Nāgar*, which means serpent-men.

Note 2.—The Nāyars and the Todas.

Dr. Rivers, in his learned and elaborate study of the social conditions of the 114 Todas, makes some interesting comparisons with regard to their customs and some of the survivals in Nāyar social life. Before venturing to criticise some of his deductions I may be allowed to state that his idea of the emigration of the Todas to their present country from Malabar is probably right, though the evidence that he has adduced does not in any way prove it. The following facts which he has not noticed may give some additional weight to this hypothesis. Among the Nāyars 234 the dairy (*Pal-pura*) is considered a thing to be kept *ceremonially pure.* No unclean 171 person may approach it, and even the pollution of a child-birth is considered to be 783 sufficiently strong to preclude those whom it affects from touching things belonging 114 to the *Pal-pura.* It would be an exaggeration to say that the *Pal-pura* is considered sacred, but it is certainly *purer* than any other part of the house. Also the way in which the Todas convert milk into butter-milk is exactly the same as among the Nāyars. These customs with regard to the dairy are prevalent, not only where there is geographical contiguity between the Nāyar-land and the Toda-land, but also in Middle Travancore, which is at least two hundred and fifty miles from the land of the Todas.

Some, however, of the arguments brought forward by Dr. Rivers would not bear 114 critical investigation. For example, he says[3]: "More important is the custom of 585

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Cf. Wm. Greiger, *Sinhalese Etymology.*

[3] Pp. 699–70.

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554 Malabar, where it is a creation of the Zamorin.

7. *Asán.*—The word means a teacher. He is also a head-man (*Karayinmél Asán*), who has certain social functions in connection with the marriage and other ceremonies.

8. *Achan.*—The word means father. It is the title of the Palghat Rajas, the ministers of the Calicut and Cochin Rajas (Mángát Achan and Páliyat Achan), and also of several other old Nayar chiefs.

9. *Mannátiyar.*—This is the title of certain aristocratic families in the Chittur Taluk near Palghat. The word is derived from *man*, earth, and *nétiyavar*, earners.

Marriage prohibitions.

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783 Among the high caste Sudras marriage is hypergamous, while the low caste Sudras are endogamous. This is the general rule, though exceptions may sometimes be found. A Nayar is allowed to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself, but his womenkind are prohibited from exercising the same liberty. This is called the *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulomam* from *Anu* with *lómam* *rómam* the hair, going with the hair or grain. So *Prathilómam* means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nayar woman, consorting with a man of the higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of lower subdivision, clan or caste, she is guilty of *Prathilómam*; and if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted.[1]

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582
783 The rule of *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam* is everywhere observed with great strictness. In many cases, Nambuthiris, Embráns, Póttis and Tamil Brahmans, Kshatriyas and

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[784]
[562]
[484]

[1] Alliances between the people of North Malabar and South Malabar seem to be extremely rare. It is partly because of the principle of Prathilomam and perhaps partly that the Nayar women cannot cross the Korapuzha which marks the boundary between the two. Nor can the women of the extreme north of North Malabar cross the river between it and South Canara. The reason is said to be that the Kolatheri Raja so commanded owing to the fear that was entertained about their being captured and taken as wives by the Arabs. Similarly, till about fifty years ago the Nayar women from North Travancore and Cochin were prohibited from going beyond Quilon southward. These customs are being overlooked by the educated members of the community and it may almost be said that the custom has begun to die out.

Further, in the extreme south of South Malabar a high caste bride mates with a low caste bridegroom on the Prathilomam already explained. The husband cannot touch her without pollution, when she is engaged in taking meals. In the case of Nambuthiris, the same custom is in force and they cannot be seen, while engaged in religious ceremonies or taking meals. With the spread of education, official status, wealth, power, and influence, many of these time-honoured customs are fast disappearing.

Ambalavásis form alliances with Nayar women, but the 564 latter and their children cannot touch their husbands and 582 fathers without polluting them. The children of this union 783 belong to the mother's family. In the clan system, descent was at first reckoned in the female line; consequently, uterine ties alone constituted kinship. The father was not regarded as related even to his children, and not considered as a member of the family. In this system all the children bear the clan name, and the clan name becomes the test of blood relationship. But the moment the descent is recognised through the male, the clan system breaks down. Among the Nayars the kinship is still reckoned through the female line.

Marriage is endogamous among the low caste Sudrás. 564 The following restrictions are however in force among all classes 582 of Sudrás. There cannot be intermarriages between the descendants of any female ancestor. It is strictly prohibited even [614] in the case of two persons belonging to the same *taravvid* or family whose relationship cannot be traced to its origin, but is only traditional. A man cannot marry the sister of his deceased wife. The custom is more changing. A man cannot marry from the family of his deceased wife, but is now limited to the *thdvashi* to which his wife belonged. Even this is now being overlooked.

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the wedding dress is torn and given to the *Chithayan* which 588
signifies the dissolution of marriage. In some places this takes [586]
place on the morning of the fifth day, and instead of this ceremony [465]
the *táli* tier is given a fee of eight annas and is dismissed
with some presents, and in others the cloth is severed into two [431]
parts and each part given to the bridegroom and the bride
separately in the presence of ***enangans*** and other friends.
Throughout South Malabar, the severing of the cloth on the [184]
fourth day is indispensable and is part of the ceremony, while,
in this State, it is said that the custom is not now in vogue.
The marriage badge is not removed soon after the divorce, but
is worn by the girl till the twenty-eighth day. Some remove
it on the fourth or the fifth day, while others wear it for a week.

In poor families, where this ceremony cannot be performed 588
on a large scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, 735
and the *táli* is tied by the mother with neither feasting nor 184
merriment. In some cases very poor people take their
girls before the deity in the ***Trikkákkarappan*** temple and tie
the *táli*, and very often do such people perform the ceremony
on the *Onam* day in front of the clay image (***Mahádévar***)
placed in their court-yard.

Where the Thirumulpád is the *táli* tier, he goes through the 588
ceremony for a number of girls, and on receipt of the fee
for his service to each girl, he departs in peace. If the *táli*
tier, whether a Kshatriya or a young man of the ***enangu***,
wishes to take her as his wife, he is at liberty to do so
with the consent of her parents; and in that case he has to
celebrate the ***sambandham*** by giving her presents of cloth.

In South Malabar and the Cochin State, the general 588
belief among the Nayars is, that the bridegroom has a right to 184
marry her if he wills, and the severing of the cloth shows [586]
the dissolution of the marriage tie, which gives her the liberty
to choose anybody else as her husband. It is also understood [833]
that, with the tying of the *táli*, the virginity ceases, and he who
brings or takes her to that stage has a right to cohabit with
her, which he relinquishes on the fourth day of the ***Tálikettu***
kalyánam. Further, the woman observes a sort of pollution [765]
for fifteen days for the death of the man who tied the [783]
tali, which proves that he is her husband. In some parts she
merely bathes, and even this has been of late given up.

The following is given to be the explanation of the ceremonial:— 588
There is very little difference between the ***Tálikettu*** 171

The Brahmanical explanation, though palpably inadequate, 588
is, that marriage is a sort of sacrement of which every maiden [783]
must partake in order that she may cleanse her own being from the taint of original sin, accomplish the salvation of her father and her ancestors, and bring forth a son to carry on the domestic worship (*Sacra privata*) of her husband's family. The Brahmans who observed this either imposed this principle [177]
on the Nayars, or the Nayars borrowed it from them in the belief that it would lead to social distinction.

Looking on this form of marriage in use, they are not regarded as constituting a religious ceremony or a *samskára* or sacrement in the Hindu or European sense of the word. "There is no officiating priest in attendance, there is no formula to be repeated, there is no *vedic*, *puranic* or religious chant or exhortation, and there is no formal benediction. The essential elements of a Brahmanical marriage, *viz.*, taking the bride by the hand or *Pánigrahanam*, the walking of seven steps or *Saptapati*, and the *hómam* or sacrifice to the fire, are not to be found among its details. Therefore the marriage customs among *marumakkathàyam* Hindus have no connection with their religious observances such as exists under ordinary Hindu law though several of the details bear a resemblance to a portion of the marriage ritual of the Nambutiris."[1]

Puberty customs (Thirandukuli).

The *Thiranduknli* is a celebration when a girl reaches 881
the age of maturity. When a girl comes of age, she is lodged in a separate room where a lamp is lit and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass with a handle, called *válkannáti*, literally a looking glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by a *Kurava* (shouts of joy by women). The women [43]
of the neighbouring families, and those of friends and relations [57+]
visit her, and some of them make presents of cloths. On the third day, the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning of the fourth day, the Mannáns or Vélans (washermen) appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and the tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and loins. In the company of maidens she leaves the room and the Vélans entertain the party, who soon move on in procession to a neighbouring tank where she wears the cloth washed by a washerman. Then

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 87.

846

and takes it in his hands. The belief is, that the temperament 852
of the child is determined by that of the person who thus [828]
sprinkles the water. All the members of the *tarawád* observes [613]
pollution for fifteen days immediately after the delivery, during [783]
which period they are prohibited from entering temples and
holy places.

First birth-day celebration.

The twenty-seventh day after the childbirth or the first 553
recurring day of the star under which it was [853]
born, is an important day, on which the
káranavan of the family gives to the child [613]
a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain
fruits reduced to a kind of pulp. Then he names the child
calling it in the ear by name, three times. In some places the nam- 553
ing ceremony takes place in the sixth month on the *Chórúnu* 574
day, *i. e.*, on the day of feeding. This is followed by a feast [613]
to all friends and relations, the expenses of which are met
by the *káranavan* of the *tarawád*. The child is not fed on 853
rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it the
flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular
variety of plantain known as *kunnan* used for this purpose.
Well-to-do parents in these days give Mellin's food.
The staple food, which is rice, is given to the child for the 852
first time, generally during the sixth month, and is, of course, 853
attended with some ceremony. Necessarily, the astrologer
fixes the day, and at the auspicious hour, the child is bathed and
adorned (which is the duty of the father), is brought and laid
on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a bright
brass lamp is placed near. On the leaf are served a small
quantity of cooked rice, generally a portion of the rice offered
to some temple divinity, some tamarind, salt, chillies and sugar.
Then the *káranavan* or the father ceremoniously sits down [613]
facing the child. First he puts into the mouth of the child, a
mixture of tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly
a little sugar. Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the
child is rice. The ceremony is, in some cases, preferably per- [778]
formed in some famous temple, that at Guruvayur being a
favourite one for this purpose. A few annas is given to the [782]
priest, who gives a small quantity of the food offered to the [465]
deity, with which the child is fed.

only training was the training of the memory, and the learned 872
pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking 876
powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of [78]
school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern
regime of elementary schools.

Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, 79
an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the 554
village.[1]

Then come the artisan classes whose services are necessary 564
in the construction of houses, and the making of implements
of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in
kind or in coin.

The other men of importance in the village economic life
were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber.
The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only [759]
did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils [79]
from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared
charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The
village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán
caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned [783]
when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the
omission of which leads to outcasting.

The village barber is another indispensable factor in the [305]
village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all
ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his
own caste-men from other villages.

The village organisation above described is preserved to a 62
certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's profession 182
will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his
services are considered to be of essential importance in matters [79]
of every day life.

Village pastimes.

The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the 526
village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*,
Kayyámkali, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite
circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjál* and others, while cards
and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock-fighting [541]
is an interesting pastime among the lower classes. [554]

The most important of the village pastimes are the dramatic
performances, a description of which is given in the 536
following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in 538

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[1] Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

Pulayan head-man raises a mound of earth on which are thrown 241
a little manure and a handful of seed. He then yokes the
cattle to the plough and turns a square plot of ground, taking
care to have furrows made in it, and the plough dropped on
the right. Ganapati is then propitiated with offerings, and [782]
the master throws the seed in the furrow, when the Pulaya [776]
head-man invokes the blessings of the gods and the de-
ceased ancestors on the seeds that have been sown broad-
cast, on the cattle that are let loose, and also on the members
of the family, and prays them for a good crop, much sunshine,
and a good harvest. A cocoanut is then cut on the plough-
share, and if the hind portion is larger than the front one, it
predicts an excellent harvest. If the nut is cut into two equal [787]
portions, the harvest will be moderate; if the cut passes through
the eyes of the nut or if no water is left in the cut portions,
misfortune is foreboded. The portions of the cocoanut are then
picked up with the milk inside them and a leaf of the *tulsi*
plant (Ocymum sanctum) is dropped into each; if the leaf
turns to the right, a prosperous harvest is assured; if to the
left, the contrary. The ceremonial concludes with loud shouts
and invocations to the gods of husbandry; and the unused
seeds are distributed among the workmen.

Nira:—The bringing in of the first fruits (*Nira*) is cele- [856]
brated at the end of Karkadagam (August), previous to which [824]
the doors and windows of the houses are cleansed with the leaves
of a tree called *paragam* (Ficus hispida) and decorated with
rice flour, while the walls are white-washed, and the yard
smeared with cow-dung. On the gates of the houses are [824]
placed various kinds of flowers together with their leaves and
branches, *viz*:—*athi* (Ficus racemosa), *ithi* (Ficus venosa),
arayal (Ficus religiosa), *peral* (Ficus Indica), *illi* (young
bamboo leaves), *nelli* (Phyllanthus Emblica), *jack* (artocarpus
integrifolia), and *mango* (manganefera indica). On the morn- [793]
ing of the ceremonial day, the priest of the temple comes out [534]
preceded by a Marar blowing a conch-shell, when a bunch of
the ears of paddy already placed by the Pulayans outside the
outer wall of the temple is taken by him to the temple with the
same Marar blowing the conch. Every house-holder then [783]
sends out to the fields a man duly purified by a bath and
smeared with ashes to gather some rice. As he brings it to

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778 thereon. The early colonists, on a second venture, finding
825 the land occupied, commenced a war against the Nágas, but
[776] Parasurama acting as arbitrator, decided in favour of the
early colonists, and ordered that they should set apart a corner
of every compound as an abode of the serpent gods. He further
ordained that these allotted places were to remain virgin-
ground, untouched by the blade of the knife or the prong of
the fork, while the under-wood and the creepers were to be
allowed to grow in wild profusion, and to such the name
778 *kávu* (grove) was given. In it are generally planted several
771 stone idols of serpents placed on a stone-basement called
chitrakúdam, the whole being held sacred and reserved by a
825 low wall round it to prevent cattle or children straying into
[782] that space. The propitiation of serpents is deemed essential
to the prosperity and well-being of every house-holder, and
[753] periodical offerings are made to them, while the neglect of
[776] these is considered to cause leprosy, sterility, or ophthalmia,
among the members of the family. These serpents are therefore
regarded as tutelary deities of the family, and the gods
along with the shrines are conveyed with the property and
frequently specified in deeds of transfer.

793 The high priest of the serpent cult is the Pámbu Mékkát
795 Nambuthiri, who lives in a house full of cobras which are said
778 to be harmless to his family. Whenever an image of a serpent
825 from a grove has to be removed from one place to another, he
[782] is sent for on the belief that he alone can do it after due propitiation
and offerings, and any tree that is cut down for this
removal must be sent to the local temple to be used as fuel.
[564] The serpent grove should not be polluted by a member of the
[841] low caste, or by a woman during her menses; and when it is
[783] so polluted or otherwise spoiled, a member of the family of
the Nambuthiri priest has to be informed. He gazes into a
[787] vessel filled with oil, points out the evil and suggests the remedy.
The ninth asterism in every month is specially selected for
771 snake worship in Nayar families, when offerings of milk and
778 water are made to them. It is said that the approach of a
825 woman during her menses will cause serpents to vacate the
[841] grove because of the impurity, and Pulluvans are required to
[782] sing songs and perform certain ceremonies to cause them to
[532] re-enter the shrines. Images of these serpents are sometimes

775 time. At the period of puberty and after child-birth women
[881] are especially liable to the attacks of these aërial beings.
[846] Charms and incantations, offerings and sacrifices, are the most
789 requisite to counteract the evils that demons do, and iron
782 rings, iron staffs, and leather shoes, are some of the specifics
that help to keep the demons at a distance.

They make their abode chiefly in the palmyra and *pála*
[787] trees, but some of them occupy even dwelling houses. Others
take the shape of human beings, while yet others possess
human beings.

775 Their name is legion, and they exist by the offerings of
782 their votaries and their tormented victims. Against the machinations of these demons, the sorcerers and exorcists bring to
776 bear the influence of their special guardian deities who in turn
791 must be propitiated with offerings before they can be called
upon to use their beneficial strength. In the case of the evil
783 spirit of him who has died an unnatural death, a Brahman
magician purifies the spirit by means of certain ceremonies
called *Tilahóma* (an offering of sesamum seeds to *agni* or fire).
789 A Chendus Nambuthiri presides at such ceremonies and transfers the spirit to an image of gold, silver, or wood which is
afterwards placed in a Vishnu temple or enshrined in a small
building put up for that purpose, there to rest in peace.

771 In the State, temples are dedicated to various demons,
346 the chief among them being the Avanangáttil Cháttan in
775 Triprayar. The temples dedicated to the small-pox demon
correspond to the *Péy Kóvils* or devil temples of the Tamil
753 Districts. In these temples are to be found the instruments
796 and symbols of demon worship, the dancing sticks or wands,
the priests' garments, tridents, etc., whilst in others there is
nothing save the images of demons. There is also an officiat-
793 ing priest, who is the devil driver and the devil dancer, and
791 who at times even becomes a *Velichapád* inspired to communicate to the votaries, who consult him in times of illness and
calamity, the wishes and intentions of that particular demon.

Worship of animals and plants.

771 To a Hindu all organic life is sacred, and his creed is
225 not to injure any living thing, while among
the animals worshipped by him the cow occupies the first place. The cow is *Kámadhénu*, the giver of all
things, and hence whenever a cow is approached, it is touched

771
with the hand which is, in token of veneration, then raised to 825
the head. Milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung are mixed together
and used for purificatory ceremonies; and the images of [237]
gods are anointed with this holy mixture called *panchagavyam*. [778]
Small doses of it are even taken internally, and it is [755]
considered an antidote against poison, besides being prescribed
as a *prâyaschit* or expiation for offences against caste, whereas [778]
the sprinkling of water mixed with dung removes sin or pollution [783]
from all persons, places, or things, and purifies them.
The bull, the vehicle of Siva, is also held sacred, and a statue [532]
of it in granite is either placed in front of the image of Siva
or in a separate shrine, and is worshipped as a God. The [776]
lizard associated with Siva, the monkey with Hanumán, the
Garuda (the brahmany kite) with Vishnu, and the peacock of
Subramania are a few of the other animals of Hindu veneration.

Of the birds of ill omen, one species of owl called *pullu* 825
is much dreaded because of the belief that it causes an illness 753
to children which results in emaciation. At the sound of its
screeching, children are taken into a room to avoid its injurious
gaze. Various are the propitiatory ceremonies performed [782]
by specialists to secure its good-will and to prevent its doing [789]
harm to babies; and amulets are worn by children as a
preventive against its evil influences. Its hideous screeches
are always associated with death.

Among trees, some are worshipped while others are used 771
for *pújas* or sacrifices. Among the former may be mentioned 824
the pipal (Ficus religiosa), a tree which is held in veneration
by the Hindus. Persons afflicted with maladies or whose planets [755]
are unfavourable, go round a pipal tree, seven, twelve,
forty-one, or one hundred and eight times, muttering prayers
and burning camphor and other incense at its foot or perchance
engage Brahmans to do so, in the belief, that it will cure
disease or counteract evil influences. The *vilva* (Ægle marmelos),
whose leaf of triple form is supposed to represent the
three eyes of Siva, and symbolise his triple function of production,
destruction, and re-production, and the *tulsi* (Ocymum
sanctum), which is sacred to Vishnu, are also worshipped. In [778]
front of every house, generally on the eastern side, or in the
central yard of a quadrangular structure, is a stone or mud
altar, on which *tulsi* or the *vilva* is planted and watered every
day, and is worshipped by the inmates of the house. From

824
765 surface. The men, when they return from their baths, bring
782 with them some harialli grass (*karukapullu*); and making an
613 obeisance with the right knee on the ground, they spread
some grass near the strip of palmyra leaf, and rings made of the leaf are also worn by all those present. The eldest of the *anandaravans* or nephew then makes offerings of water, turmeric and leaves of the *cherula*, as well as balls of boiled rice with a few gingelly grains and curds poured over it. As boys are forbidden to make the offerings, should the nephew chance to be a boy, it is considered sufficient for him to touch one of the elders who, under those circumstances, makes the offerings. The whole is then covered with a plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved near it, and some milk is poured under the leaf. This is left undisturbed for some seconds, after which the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand; it is then removed and torn in two at its mid-rib, one piece being placed on either side of the *pindams*. And now the ceremony is over for the day. The agnates rise and remove their wet clothing, sometimes even bathe again. The torn cloth is tied round a pillar near the basket covering the leaf, and the leaf is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour for the performance of the ceremony. At the end of each day's ceremony the offerings of rice balls left are unguarded for a short time to allow the crows to feed on them; after which they are removed by the female members of the *tarawád*, who are junior to the deceased, and the eldest of them carries the offerings to the side of a tank
[825] and throws them into the water. It is believed that if the
crows take them, the spirit is pleased. Should the crows leave
[775] any remains, they must be thrown into the water, as dogs must
[231] not eat the offerings.

During the seven days the house of the deceased and all
765 its inmates are considered to be under pollution, and the mem-
783 bers of that *tarawád* may not go to any other house nor can
613 members of other *tarawáds* visit them without polluting them-
574 selves; but this pollution can be removed by bathing. During
this period, however, as a rule, the *káranaván* of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is at home on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Here it must be said, that in some cases, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or in kind to help the *káranavan* with the expenditure to which the funeral rites put him.

On the third day after the death, all those who are related to 765
the *tarawad* by matrimonial alliances combine and give a feast 613
to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours. This is
called the *Patni kanji*. On the seventh day a return feast is
given by the members of the *tarawad*, to all relations and
neighbours. Between the seventh and the fourteenth day after
death, no ceremonies are performed, but the members of the
family are under pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes
the *Sanchayanam*. It is the disposal of the calcined remains,
the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the *tarawad*
go to the place of cremation, and picking up the unburnt bones
of the deceased, place them in an earthern pot which is sun-
dried—not burnt in the usual way—and cover up the mouth of
the pot with a piece of cloth. The eldest carries it and, followed
by the rest, proceeds to the nearest river (it must be a running
stream) into which it is thrown. In some places the bones [778]
are collected on the seventh and preserved in a pot which,
when convenient, is carried to Benares, Rameswaram, Gaya, or
to Thirunelly in Wynad and there deposited as above described.
Such a disposal is called *Ashtagaya-Sradham*, and puts an end
to the need of all earthly ceremonies—nor is there any need to
continue the annual ceremony for that person. The belief is [775]
that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead
gives peace to the departed spirit, which will not thereafter
injure the living members of the *tarawad*.

On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony at which 765
a man of the *Attikurissi* clan officiates as priest. In the morn- 783
ing the members of the family wear cloths washed by a *Vélan* 613
(washerman) and assemble together for purification by the Na- 793
yar priest who throws on them, both before and after bathing,
paddy, rice, gingelly seeds, and the holy mixture (milk, oil, etc.).
The Elayad or the Brahman priest performs the *Punyáham* or
purification of the house, well, etc., and on the sixteenth day he
takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day [431]
and the morning of the sixteenth, the priests and the villagers are
sumptuously fed, and presents of cloth are made to the latter
and money to the former. In the Chittur Taluk, the priestly [604]
functions are sometimes performed by the Elayad, and *Deeksha* [593]
(leaving the body unshaved for forty-one days or a year) is ob-
served by the nephew and the son of the deceased. The one 765
who is under this mark of mourning makes offerings of rice balls 613
[782]

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the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to 556 the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone.

In grand festivities in which food is served to a large 574 number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those 564 served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given 252 when I deal with them.

Social status.

The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the 564 polluting castes. Even among themselves there are various grades of social precedence, and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may some- [264] times eat with those of the lower, but their women never take their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is [574] curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occa- [796] sions, good many formalities have to be observed in the [576] allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or etiquette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The [262] consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water [271] from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes [793] their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give [783] *punnydham* (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class.

Dress.

Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life 291 of a nation, and hygiene plays a considerable part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth, two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features. A small upper garment is also worn while at home A Nayar [293] always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there

105 There is a small community of Jews in Cochin, divided into White,
563 Brown, and Black, the last named being the most numerous. Other
[095] Kerala residents are foreigners such as Canarese, Tamils, Arabs, and
Europeans.

105 Untouchability has been made a penal offence by the present Indian
564 Constitution and there is undoubtedly a tendency among the more en-
783 lightened in the country to combat its evils and attempt to eradicate it
from modern Hindu society. On the other hand, the religious minded (and there are many) maintain that since the Constitution is a secular one and allows full freedom of religious belief and practice, the legislator cannot interfere in questions of caste and untouchability, as these have to do with the religious law and structure of India. The fact is that, today, untouchability is not what it was, but it cannot be said either that it has been done away with altogether. A visitor to Kerala is certainly immediately made aware of this, as many traditional views on what constitutes intercaste pollution and what does not are still very much in evidence. Thus, although a member of the artisan caste, a
[084] Kammalan, perhaps no longer pollutes those above him in the hierarchy,
[264] atmospherically, at twenty four feet as he used to do, it is nevertheless
unthinkable that he should sit down to a meal of cooked rice with a
[463] Nambudri, or even for that matter with a Nayar. The aboriginal Nay-
adis who still live off begging and hunting may possibly "come into
[484] town" now and not have to keep off the roads for fear of polluting other
[084] castes merely by being seen within a distance of seventy four feet, but
they are not for that admitted to a would-be reformed Indian community in which no distinctions of caste, creed and colour are made any longer; in fact, they themselves, probably out of some sort of perverse attachment to their powers of polluting, refuse to be rehabilitated – as has been attempted by the former government of Travancore – and prefer to carry on with their traditional way of life.

It can thus be safely said that pollution of the higher castes by the lower is very much believed in and guarded against, even in Kerala
[841] today. Menstruating women, and also those who have given birth, are
[846] still considered to be unclean for a period, varying with the people to
whom they belong. And the various kin groups, of which every indiv-
[614] idual is a member among the Hindus of Kerala, will equally be con-
[846] sidered unclean and polluting for a certain amount of days – diminishing
[065] in number in inverse proportion to the height of the caste – after a birth
or a death has taken place.

080 Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-

105 Without going into the elaborate details of the occasion – which are
588 very different, depending on the caste to which the girl belongs – it is
enough to mention that its main item is the tying of the *tali* round the
child's neck by someone who is, usually, a substitute bridegroom or
manavalan. He should be of a higher or at least of the same caste, but
he can also be an old, venerable person who has already done this, for
instance, to the mother; sometimes the father takes the place of the
manavalan, at others, it is the maternal uncle. That the mother herself
should do so, is not unknown, and cases in which a clay figure has taken
the place of a live person are on record. It has also become increasingly
the custom to tie the *tali* on many girls at the same time (to save expense), and the tendency is to do the ceremony earlier and earlier in the
children's lives.

After the man who ties the *tali* has fulfilled his task, he is not entitled
to touch the girl. But shades of the times when he perhaps did do so
still exist in the practice of his attempting to force the girl's bedchamber
door, and of his being pelted by male onlookers belonging to her kin
group, which does take place in some of the lower castes. In south
Malabar, he is supposed to lie down under the same blanket with the
girl for a few moments; among the Ambalavasis, and in some of the
sub-castes, he may even spend three nights with her, but under the strict
supervision of a chaperon put there to see that he does not touch her.
In some cases, a form of divorce ends the ceremony before the *manavalan* is allowed to go. *Tali* tying is universal in Kerala, where it is not
[184] limited to the Hindus only, but is also practised by the Moslem Moplas
and the Christians.

It is interesting to note that the Portuguese traveller of the beginning
105 of the sixteenth century, Duarte Barbosa, mentions that before a Nayar
582 girl can be married, afer the *tali* has been tied on her, she should be
588 deflowered before puberty, by some young man called in specially to do
833 this from outside the caste, "for amongst themselves they hold it an
[183] unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women" (*The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, p. 124).

4. LAND-TENURE

105 Kerala is an agricultural state and everyone in it is either dependant on
241 the produce of the land or linked to it by serving those who till the soil.
The main crops are rice, coconuts, pepper and arecanuts, in that order
of importance. Others, less important, are pulses, tapioca, spices such

Thandans

*595 114 his presence there to the others. I enquired from my informant, Panju, if this were still done. As in the case of other polyandrous people whom I had questioned on this point, he laughed heartily at the idea and said that he had never heard of anything like it. According to him, it was usually the woman who decided with whom she should spend the night; the others then stayed out on the verandah or in another room. Even in the older generation, he did not think that anything remotely resembling the leaving of a knife at the door was ever done.

When I discussed the point with one of the interpreters, he told me that in some polyandrous households that he knew, the husband who did not wish to be disturbed when he was with the common wife would leave his clothes lying about in the neighbouring room or on the verandah as a signal to his brothers. An old Thandan woman confirmed this one day when I met her at Shoranur, where she had come to be interviewed by my wife. She added, however, that there was no fast and firm system and that such things varied "from village to village". It could also be said, I suppose, that they differ from household to household. On the whole, however, there does not seem to be a more developed system of signalling in Kerala than anywhere else.

*595 At home, the obligations of the men consist in making a living for the family in whatever profession or occupation they are engaged. Panju and Narayana cultivate the fields and gather the harvest, often assisting their elder brothers or being helped by them. The wife takes on the
[853] household chores, such as cooking and keeping the house clean; she also
[862] looks after the children as long as she is suckling them, which may be, in common with other Asiatic mothers, for a very long period – two or three years. The fathers will start attending to their offspring when the
[841] woman is isolated during the polluting period of her menses, and thus
[783] gradually come to know the children better and to influence their up-
[855] bringing. Dominance at home is determined solely by the personality of one of the fathers, and does not follow seniority in age. It is how-
[562] ever always a man who is the head of the household, the woman being treated here, as elsewhere among other polyandrous peoples, as the property of the husbands.

Does the woman enjoy living in polyandry and what are her conjugal obligations towards her mates? I put this question to Panju as I had to others whom I had interviewed in other communities. He was of the opinion that it all depends on how she feels towards the men. Devaki and Kuniyama, while being good wives to Mayadi in the first case, and to Raman in the second, had been bad ones to the younger men of the

as their attendants, to carry their sword and shield 564
before them.

10. Vandikkāran.—A name, meaning cartmen, for those who supply fuel to temples, and cleanse the vessels belonging thereto.

11. Kuttina.—The only heiress of a Svarupam tarwad is said to have been a maid-servant in the Vadakketam Brāhman's house, and her daughter's tālikettu ceremony to have been celebrated in her master's newly-built cowshed. The bride was called kuttilachchi, or bride in a cowshed, and her descendants were named
Kuttina Nāyars. They intermarry among themselves, [783]
and, having no priests of their own, obtain purified water [793]
from Brāhmans to remove the effects of pollution.

12. Matavar.—Also known as Puliyattu, Veliyattu, and Kāllur Nāyars. They are believed to have been good archers in former times.

13. Otatu, also called Kusa. Their occupation is to tile or thatch temples and Brāhman houses.

14. Mantalayi.—A tract of land in the Kalkulam taluk, called Mantalachchi Konam, was granted to them
by the State. They are paid mourners, and attend at [765]
the Trivandrum palace when a death occurs in the royal family.

15. Manigrāmam.—Believed to represent Hindu [797]
recoveries from early conversion to Christianity. Manigrāmam was a portion of Cranganore, where early Christian immigrants settled.

16. Vattaykkatan, better known in Travancore as Chakala Nāyars, form in many respects the lowest sub-division. They are obliged to stand outside the sacrificial stones (balikallu) of a sanctuary, and are not allowed to take the title Pillai. Pulva is a title of distinction among them. One section of them is engaged

564 or with one of the small sects coming between the
Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any
circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which
[264] is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan
inferior to her ; a man may, and does without restriction.
564 Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere
651 social standing, but never those by one who is racially
613 inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the
inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of
the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it
to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where
they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or
touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they
allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live
in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but
557 are never of it. The custom, which permits a man
564 to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than
831 himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the
same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and pratilōmam.
Dr. Gundert derives anulōmam from anu, with
lōmam (rōmam), hair, or going with the hair or grain.
So pratilōmam means going against the hair or grain.
According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting
with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies
the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation.
558 By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan)
564 or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the
831 difference of caste were admittedly great, she would
be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole
564 family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom
851 is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his
783 own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

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* Tarwâd or taravâd, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.

afterwards to remove pollution. The children in the 564
marumakkatayam family belong, of course, to their 851
mother's family, clan, and caste. They are Nãyars, not 783
Nambûtiris. The Nãyars of North Malabar are held to
be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those 564
of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the
river Korapuzha, seven miles north of Calicut, so that a
woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a
man of her own clan name of South Malabar. A Nãyar
woman of North Malabar cannot pass northward beyond
the frontier; she cannot pass the hills to the eastward; [484]
and she cannot cross the Korapuzha to the south. It is [784]
tabu. The women of South Malabar are similarly con- [562]
fined by custom, breach of which involves forfeiture of
caste. To this rule there is an exception, and of late 564
years the world has come in touch with the Malayãli, 562
who nowadays goes to the University, studies medicine 178
and law in the Presidency town (Madras), or even in far 484
off England. Women of the relatively inferior Akattu
Charna clan are not under quite the same restrictions as
regards residence as are those of most of the other clans;
so, in these days of free communications, when Malayãlis
travel, and frequently reside far from their own country,
they often prefer to select wives from this Akattu Charna
clan. But the old order changeth everywhere, and now-
adays Malayãlis who are in the Government service, and
obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who
have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have
wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and
taken with them their wives who are of clans other than
the Akattu Charna. The interdiction to travel, and the
possible exception to it in the case of Akattu Charna
women, has been explained to me in this way. The 841
Nãyar woman observes pollution for three days during 783
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841 783 [613] menstruation. While in her period, she may not eat or drink with any other member of the taravād, and on the fourth day she must be purified. Purification is known as māttu (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman, who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the Mannān or Vannān caste, whose *métier* is to wash for the Nāyars and Nambūtiris, but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tīyan caste, giving her, after her bath, one of her own cloths to wear (māttu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth, which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child-birth, or menstruation, must be removed by māttu. Until it is done, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment, under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. [689] How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks [613] vengeance on a taravād by preventing the right person giving māttu to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not, with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal, inflict greater injury. Now the Nāyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of māttu. My informant tells me that, the Vannān caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nāyar women cannot go where these are not to be found, and that māttu must be done by one of that caste. But I know, from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranād for example, where the Nāyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tīyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction [illegible] has other roots than those involved in māttu. It does [illegible] not account for the superstition against crossing water, 562 which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The origin of the interdiction to cross the river southwards

564 this tract or nâd there were originally six stânis or chieftains,
634 who ruled, under the Râja, with the assistance, or
subject to the constitutional control, of four assemblies of
Nâyars called Küttams. Each küttam had its hereditary
president. In this tract there are seven groups of
kulams. The highest includes twelve kulams, Vengalat,
Pattillat, Vīyyūr, Nelliōt, Atunkudi, Amayangalat,
Nellōli, Nilanchēri, Rendillat, Pulliyāni, Orakätteri, and
[553] Venmēri. Of these, the Pattillat and Rendillat (members
of the ten and members of the two illams or houses) affix
the title Adiyōdi to their names, the last three affix the
title Nambiyar, and the rest affix Nāyar. Of the six
stânis already mentioned, three, with the title of Adiyōdi,
belong to the Vengalat kulam, while two of the presidents
of kuttams belonged to the Pattillat kulam. The
younger members of the stāni houses are called kidavu.
It is the duty of women of Viyyūr and Nelliōt kulams to
join in the bridal procession of members of the Vengalat
kulam, the former carrying lamps, and the latter
salvers containing flowers, while the Rendillat Adiyōdis
564 furnish cooks to the same class. Pattillat Adiyōdis
783 and Orakätteri Nambiyars observe twelve days' pollution,
while all the other kulams observe fifteen. The
second group consists of six kulams, Eravattūr, Ara-Eravattūr
(or half Eravattūr), and Attikōdan Nāyars,
Tonderi Kidāvus, Punnan Nambiyars, and Mēnōkkis.
All these observe fifteen days' pollution. The third
group consists of three kulams, Tacchōli to which the
remaining three stânis belong, Kōthōli, and Kuruvattāncheri.
[553] All affix Nâyar to their names, and observe
fifteen days' pollution. The fourth group consists of
three kulams, Peruvânian Nambiyars, Chellâdan Nâyars,
[643] and Vennapâlan Nâyars. All three observe fifteen
days' pollution. The name Peruvânian means great or

principal oil-man ; and it is the duty of this caste to 564
present the Kurumbranād Rāja with oil on the occasion 783
of his formal installation. The fifth group consists of the [643]
three kulams, Mannangazhi, Paramchela, and Pallikara
Nāyars, all observing fifteen days' pollution. A member 564
of the first-named class has to place an āmanapalaga [643]
(the traditional seat of Nambūdiris and other high castes)
for the Kurumbranād Rāja to sit on at the time of
his installation, while a member of the second has to
present him with a cloth on the same occasion. The
sixth group consists of four kiriyams named Patam,
Tulu, Manan, and Ottu respectively, and has the collective
name of Rāvāri. The seventh group consists
of six kulams, Kandōn, Kannankōdan, Kotta, Karumba,
Kundakollavan, and Panakādan Nāyars. All observe [783]
fifteen days' pollution, and the women of these six
kulams have certain duties to perform in connection with [841]
the purification of women of the Vengalat, Paṭṭillat, and
Orakatteri kulams. Besides these seven groups, there
are a few other classes without internal sub-divisions.
One such class is known as Pāppini Nāyar. A woman
of this class takes the part of the Brāhmini woman
(Nambissan) at the tāli-kettu kalyanam of girls belonging
to the kulams included in the third group. Another
class called Pālattavan takes the place of the Attikurissi
Nāyar at the funeral ceremonies of the same three
kulams."

In illustration of the custom of polyandry among the 595
Nāyars of Malabar in by-gone days, the following
extracts may be quoted. "On the continent of India,"
it is recorded in Ellis' edition of the Kural, "polyandry
is still said to be practiced in Orissa, and among particular
tribes in other parts. In Malayālam, as is well known,
the vision of Plato in his ideal republic is more completely

of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting [613]
on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called [564]
Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli [793]
to the Mānavālan, and the family astrologer shouts [787]
muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan,
putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the
neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an
arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families [556]
a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the [533]
couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her
presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office.
The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to [783]
a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house,
where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution
for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in
some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each
other's hands. After changing their clothes they come
home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native [534]
drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, [231]
and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come
home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is
required to force them open. He then enters the house,
and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt
and female friends of the girl then approach, and give
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the [264]
boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same
leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed
into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan
and girl separately in the presence of enangans and
friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to [586]
constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," [184]
Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar.
These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to [765]
which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

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on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs 843
to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the 564
girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with
the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind
branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the [782]
juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl [824]
waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers,
and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour
begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, 844
"women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In 564
some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. 783
Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the 846
mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman [564]
of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is
the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pol- [764]
lution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the [825]
woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of [824]
the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds.
Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the
ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the
family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water
from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's
head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she
again plunges in the water, from which she emerges
thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the
mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has
also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on
the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few
drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child
is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles
the water. All the members of the taravād observe [613]
pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

which has just been described. Now, when it has been 764
completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the 613
house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has 782
been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a 775
safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with
a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at
the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated.
The balls of rice are removed by women and girls of the
taravād who are junior to the deceased. They place
them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
leads the way to a tank, on the bank of which the rice
is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat 825
it; for, if they do, the impression is received that the
deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering. But, if
somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and
eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to
be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice
has been thrown away. When the ceremony which has
been described has been performed for the seventh time,
i.e., on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra
leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the
ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During 765
these seven days, no member of the taravād goes to any 613
other house. The house of the dead, and all its inmates 783
are under pollution. No outsider enters it but under 574
ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing.
A visitor entering the house of the dead during
these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own
house. During these seven days, the Karanavan of the
family receives visits of condolence from relatives and
friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday
or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel, and go
home, bathing ere they enter their houses. It is said

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613 that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with
574 them small presents in money or kind to help the
[783] Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral
rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must
not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all
those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the
deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates
of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one
man or woman from each house. The person so invited
is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi.
On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the
taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.
Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād
remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day
764 comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined
613 remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male
[415] members of the taravād go to the place of cremation,
and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they
find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been
sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover
up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and,
all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the
nearest river (it must be running water), which receives
the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return
[184] home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected
[778] on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to
take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya,
Ramēswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much
nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there
764 dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or
769 ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there
613 deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764
This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the 613 [769]
need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the [775]
collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead
gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, [787]
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764
the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613
Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783
member of the taravād should bathe before he enters
his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in
which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the
persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and
the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465]
on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766
taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613
there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765
sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302
friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams
there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body
unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no
variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184]
forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I
have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year.
He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of
the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765
is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613
seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782]
his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784]
[834]

mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering 764
of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the 184
body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the
deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times,
throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings
of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and
then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost
wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot
of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is
broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an [766]
elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya
and sanchayanam, and the daily bali performed at the
bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the
courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one.
The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such
obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the 765
members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vēlan, 783
and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar 184
priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them
paddy and rice and sprinkles the holy mixture. The
Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnayaham
or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes
the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth [574]
day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits
and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of
cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the [564]
Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs [793]
priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Diksha is [769]
performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the
benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is
invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal
uncle, and elder brother."

In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. 342
Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or [823]

In some families, after
796 the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds
526 are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of
535 the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other
[524] prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are
also resorted to."

264 On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as
515 follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by
the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his
782 food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It
783 is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the
[572] temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed;
[564] generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere
near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any
inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house
from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks
newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is
pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he
[683] can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in
his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste
thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly
[656] with a sword; there would be no words. Now that
the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms
[671] Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a
[178] law system under which high and low are rated alike,
the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious
grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him
as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not
diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the
same way.

796 "I will attempt a description of the ceremonial
[773] observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near
Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where
Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain
an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

event the festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her 796
followers. The festival lasts for seven days. When I [773]
visited it in 1895, the last day was on the 31st of March.
Before daybreak of the first day, the ordinary temple
priest, a Mūssad, will leave the temple after having
swept it and made it clean; and (also before daybreak) [793]
five Nambūtiris will enter it, bearing with them sudhi
kalasam. The kalasam is on this occasion made of the [237]
five products of the cow (panchagavyam), together with [778]
some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree, and darbha
grass, all in one vessel. Before being brought to the [789]
temple, mantrams or magic verses will have been said
over it. The contents of the vessel are sprinkled all
about the temple, and a little is put in the well, thus
purifying the temple and the well. The Nambūtiris [793]
will then perform the usual morning worship, and, either
immediately after it or very soon afterwards, they leave
the temple, and the Mūssad returns and resumes his
office. The temple belongs to four taravāds, and no [613]
sooner has it been purified than the Kāranavans of [783]
these four taravāds, virtually the joint-owners of the
temple (known as Urālas) present to the temple servant
(Pishārodi) the silver flag of the temple, which has been
in the custody of one of them since the last festival.
The Pishārodi receives it, and hoists it in front of the
temple (to the east), thus signifying that the festival has
begun. While this is being done, emphasis and grandeur [411]
is given to the occasion by the firing off of miniature [201]
mortars such as are common at all South Indian festivals.
After the flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the
temple small flags of coloured cloth. For the next [788]
few days there is nothing particular to be done beyond
the procession morning, noon, and night; the image of
Bhagavati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra

inconceivably desolate and dreary; but during the month 796
Edavam (May-June) upwards of 50,000 Nāyars and 728
Tiyans from all parts of Malabar throng the shrine for
the twenty-eight days of the annual festival. During the
rest of the year, the temple is given up to the revels of
Siva and Parvati, and the impious Hindu who dares to
intrude is consumed instantly to ashes. The two great
ceremonies are the Neyyāttam and the Elanīrāttam, the
pouring of ghee (clarified butter) and the pouring of the
milk of the green cocoanut. The former is performed [564]
by the Nāyars, who attend the festival first, and the
latter by Tiyans. In May, all roads lead to Kottiyūr, [785]
and towards the middle of the month the ghee pourers,
as the Nāyar pilgrims are called, who have spent the [783]
previous four weeks in fasting and purificatory rites,
assemble in small shrines subordinate to the Kottiyūr
temple. Thence, clad in white, and bearing each
upon his head a pot of ghee, they set forth in large
bodies headed by a leader. At Manattana the pilgrims
from all parts of Malabar meet, and thence to Kottiyūr
the procession is unbroken. However long their journey, [195]
the pilgrims must eat only once, and the more filthy
their language, the more orthodox is their conduct.
As many as five thousand pots of ghee are poured over
the lingam every year. After the Neyyāttam ceremony,
the Nāyars depart, and it is the turn of the Tiyans.
Their preparations are similar to those of the Nāyars,
and their language *en route* is even more startling.
Eruvatti near Kadirūr is the place where most of them [782]
assemble for their pilgrimage, and their green cocoanuts
are presented gratis by the country people as an offering
to the temple. The Elanīrāttam ceremony begins at
midnight, and the pilgrims heap up their cocoanuts in
front of the shrine continuously till the evening of the

they might become a prey to these ravenous demons. 788
In short, the Bharani day inaugurates a reign of terror 796
in the locality, lasting for these seven days. Afterwards, [776]
all the dirt is removed. The temple is cleansed and [783]
sanctified, and again left open to public worship. The pilgrims return, but not in the same manner in which they repaired thither. During the backward journey, no obscene songs or expressions are indulged in. They are to come back quietly and calmly, without any
kind of demonstrations. They get back to their respec- [431]
tive homes, and distribute the sandals and other pujah substances to their relations and friends who have elected to remain at home; and the year's pilgrimage is brought to a close."

"The month Karkkatakam," Mr. Fawcett writes, 526
"when the Malayālis say the body is cool, is the time 875
when, according to custom, the Nāyar youths practice 564
physical exercises. At Payōli in North Malabar, when I was there in 1895, the local instructor of athletics was a Paravan, a mason by caste. As he had the adjunct Kurup to his name, it took some time to discover the fact. Teachers of his ilk are invariably of the Paravan caste, and, when they are believed to be properly accomplished, they are given the honorific Kurup. So carefully are things regulated that no other person was permitted to teach athletics within the amsham (a local area, a small county), and his womenfolk had privileges, they only being the midwives who could attend on the Nāyar women of the amsham. His fee for a course of exercises for the month was ten rupees. He, and some of his pupils, gave an exhibition of their quality.
Besides bodily contortions and somersaults, practiced in 526
a long low-roofed shed having a sandy floor, there is play with the following instruments :—watta ; cheruvadi,

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India

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435 Site values of land for building are getting higher and higher in the 'town', chiefly because the Shoranur-Cochin Railway now runs through this place, the principal offices of the taluk are here, and a high school has just been opened. Rs. 500 per acre may be paid in the 'town'; Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the rest of the village area. But the best wet land fetches up to Rs. 1,500 per acre. Cultivable land fetches far higher prices than building land, because only land unfit for cultivation, of which there is enough, is used for building.

423 The practice of exchanging lands is unknown. Generally, though not always, holdings are continuous. Field huts, built in [343] the midst of their fields, are often used by big farmers. The seeds, the harvested paddy and other crops, the stock, the implements, etc., are kept there.

296 *Subsidiary industries.*—Weaving is not practised. In the north-eastern part of the State, however, handloom weaving of an exquisite sort and also of a rough character is practised.

285 Mat-weaving of an exquisite pattern out of certain reeds duly coloured is practised by a set of people locally known as 'Koravas.' 735 The condition of these men, however, is miserable. They have no capital, no organization or culture, but usually make their wares to order, though now and then a few enterprising middlemen avail [787] themselves of these people's skill. They talk a jargon of Tamil and Malayalam, and their females, like gipsies, beg from house to [791] house and profess themselves to be adepts in palmistry. They make mats costing from Re. 1 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20. They yet live from hand to mouth; and I have my doubts whether they will be able to keep up their skill unless knowing people help to raise their economic condition.

564 Every village moreover contains within its borders the following castes who follow their hereditary crafts:—the Marasari (carpenter), Kallasari (mason), Tattan (goldsmith), Musari (brazier), Kollan (blacksmith), and Tolkollan (leather-worker). There are a few families of each of these castes in Watakanchery also. "As their services are much in requisition and as they earn better wages than unskilled labourers, they are still engaged in their hereditary occupation. The first five groups are socially in a par with each other. They all interdine, but do not intermarry. But the Tolkollans are considered inferior in status to the rest and cannot touch them without causing pollution, probably on account of their [595] work in leather which in its raw state is considered impure. Polyandry of the fraternal type was prevalent among them, several brothers marrying one wife and the children being treated as common to all. This practice however is fast dying out, if it has [783] not already done so." (Census Reports.) One special feature in the caste-hierarchy is that these people are made to stand at a specified distance while approaching the higher castes (24 feet is the rule).

466 These castes minister to the every day needs of the community, executing their work generally to order. As they are very poor, they cannot afford to work on their own account on a commercial 326 scale. The village usually contains a recognized *desa-asari* (village smith) to whom the farmers pay a certain amount of paddy at the harvesting season of the year for the repair of their implements. None but the village-smith is entitled to this dole. These may entertain apprentices from their own caste-people, though the

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general structures
[591] as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
595 worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
[591] patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[171] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary relations
[586] between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[783] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pollution
and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-cousin.
Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categorical
cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong